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Also Out This Month

- *Chasing Mavericks* - Gerard Butler stars in the surfing drama
- *Trap For Cinderella* - an amnesiac rebuilds her life after a tragic event
- *We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks* - a documentary about the controversial website
- *Breathe In* - Guy Pearce falls for young foreign exchange student Felicity Jones
- *The Frozen Ground* - Nicolas Cage sets to bring a serial killer to justice

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## MOVIE OF THE MONTH: THE WORLD'S END

There's no reason why the third film in the so-dubbed "Three Flavours Cornetto" trilogy shouldn't be highly anticipated by film fans everywhere.

Beginning with *Shaun of the Dead* in 2004, swiftly followed by *Hot Fuzz* in 2007, the trio of standalone movies with many recurring gags has gained a large following by many movie lovers, and launched the careers of actors Simon Pegg (*Star Trek*) and Nick Frost (*Attack The Block*), as well as director Edgar Wright (*Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*).

Six years of solo projects and other dalliances later, Wright and Pegg have finally written the third and final installment, which takes on the name of *The World's End*.

This one aims to swerve into the social science-fiction genre, along the lines of John Wyndham and Samuel Youd (don't know who they are? That's what the Internet is for, people!), but also with a decidedly apocalyptic theme. Perhaps not as much so as, say, *This Is The End* (review for that on page 10) but its events still going to be rather catastrophic.

Pegg and Frost, as ever, headline the movie, but they are supported by an impressive British cast that includes Martin Freeman (*The Hobbit: An*



Simon Pegg and friends attempt the most apocalyptic pub crawl ever in Edgar Wright's *The World's End*

*Unexpected Journey*), Paddy Considine (*Now Is Good*), Eddie Marsan (*Tyrannosaur*) and Rosamund Pike (*Die Another Day*), as well as frequent collaborators with Wright such as Rafe Spall (*Life of Pi*), Steve Oram and Alice Lowe (*Sightseers*), David Bradley (*Harry Potter*), Mark Heap (*Spaced*) and Michael Smiley (*Kill List*).

The story starts out simple enough, with a group of kids attempting an epic pub crawl in their hometown of Newton Haven, but failing just before they reach the final pub in their quest, *The World's End*.

20 years later, their leader Gary King (Pegg), a 40-year-old man who's still mentally trapped in his teens, convinces his

now better-off friends - solicitor Andy (Frost), estate agent Ollie (Freeman), architect Steven (Considine) and car salesman Peter (Marsan) - to reluctantly restart the pub crawl with every intention of finally reaching *The World's End*. But over the course of the night, the reconciled friends realize that something is wrong with the town they grew up in, and that the real struggle is not just theirs but humankind's. In short, getting to *The World's End* turns out to be the least of their worries.

Packed with enough thrills and laughs needed to properly close out this great trilogy, *The World's End* deserves to be seen, Cornetto in hand, from **July 18th**.

## News Round-Up

- Jackie Chan, Wesley Snipes, Nicolas Cage and Milla Jovovich are in negotiations for *The Expendables 3*
- Karen Gillan, Benicio Del Toro and John C. Reilly join *Guardians of the Galaxy*
- Matt Smith is to depart *Doctor Who* in this year's Christmas special
- *The Wizard of Oz* will be re-released in IMAX 3D in September for the film's 75th anniversary
- Mia Wasikowska replaces Emma Stone in Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak*
- Chevy Chase and Gillian Jacobs join the *Hot Tub Time Machine* sequel
- Bill Irwin and Casey Affleck join Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar*
- Leonardo DiCaprio eyes the role of Rasputin in a new biopic
- Hugh Bonneville joins the *Paddington Bear* movie
- Aaron Taylor-Johnson is eyed for the role of Quicksilver in *The Avengers 2*
- A *Man of Steel* sequel is being fast-tracked, with Zack Snyder and David Goyer returning as director and writer respectively
- Jon M. Chu returns to direct *G.I. Joe 3*
- Holliday Grainger and Sophie McShera are the evil step-sisters, while Helena Bonham Carter is the Fairy Godmother in Kenneth Branagh's *Cinderella*
- Tracey Ullman and Anna Kendrick join the cast of *Into the Woods*
- Eddie Redmayne will headline Stephen Hawking biopic *Theory of Everything*
- Arnold Schwarzenegger confirms his returning roles in *Terminator 5* and *The Expendables 3*
- Emma Watson will headline fantasy adaptation *Queen of the Tearling*
- Marvel Studios announces three mystery films (two in 2016 and one in 2017)

## PACIFIC RIM



Humanity creates monsters to fight monsters in Guillermo del Toro's sci-fi action flick *Pacific Rim*

We may be a year away from Michael Bay bringing even more giant robot scraps to the table with *Transformers 4*, but in the meantime it's Guillermo del Toro's chance to shine in the field with his MASSIVE latest project *Pacific Rim*.

And when I say "massive", I mean the real deal: the creatures found in the filmmaker's first directorial job since 2008's *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* make us humans look like ants to even ants. Yes, THAT big. Refreshingly, it's also one of the few original blockbusters we're being treated to this summer, coming directly from the mind of del Toro so it's bound to be fantastical as well as creative.

Its largeness not only extends into its originality, but also into its international cast which includes Charlie Hunnam (*Sons of Anarchy*), Idris Elba (*Prometheus*), Rinko Kikuchi (*Babel*), Charlie Day (*Horrible*

*Bosses*), Burn Gorman (*Torchwood*), Robert Kazinsky (*Red Tails*), Max Martini (*Saving Private Ryan*), and Ron Perlman (*Hellboy*). Gaming fans should also have their ears pricked up, for there is also a voice role by one Ellen McLain - that's right, it's GLaDOS from the *Portal* franchise!

Anyway, onto the story: we find ourselves on an Earth in the near future, when giant monsters known as "Kaiju" emerge from a crevasse in

the Pacific Ocean and reign terror and destruction on the planet. To combat the terror, humanity creates giant robots known as "Jaegers" which are mind-controlled by two pilots. As the war rages on and hope seems to be slipping, the fate of the world depends on a former pilot (Hunnam) and an untested trainee (Kikuchi) in their Jaeger to save the planet from destruction.

*Pacific Rim* invades cinemas on **July 12th**.

## MONSTERS UNIVERSITY

If you're in your late teens or early 20s, then it's likely that *Monsters Inc.* remains a classic animated film in your childhood.

And if you are indeed in that same age range now, then its new prequel, *Monsters University*, should prove to be a classic animated film in your early adult life.

Pixar - who are in a rut as of late, with its last two entries *Cars 2* and *Brave* not being on par with its previous work - has made the smart decision to not ruin the perfect ending to the first film and instead tell a new story with younger versions of these characters.

It also earns extra points due to how all the kids who saw the film over ten years ago are now roughly the same age as lovable monster duo Mike and Sulley are depicted in this film, so it has more reason to connect with the audience of its past.

Billy Crystal (*When Harry Met Sally*) and John Goodman (*Argo*) return to voice Mike and Sulley respectively, while Steve Buscemi (*Reservoir Dogs*) is also back as the villainous Randall.

A young Mike Wazowski (again voiced by Billy Crystal) enrolls in a Scaring course at Monsters University



Also, hear out for Pixar "good luck charm" John Ratzenberger in his trademark cameo.

Newer cast members this time round include Helen Mirren (*The Queen*), Alfred Molina (*Spider-Man 2*), Charlie Day (*Horrible Bosses*), Nathan Fillion (*Serenity*), Aubrey Plaza (*Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*) and John Krasinski (*Away We Go*).

Set ten years before the events of *Monsters Inc.*, a young and serious Michael "Mike" Wazowski (Crystal) enrolls in a course in Scaring at Monsters

University. There, he meets the playful James P. Sullivan, better known as "Sulley" (Goodman), who is also listed on the same Scaring course as Mike. They soon become enemies in a bitter rivalry that tears their individual worlds apart, but ultimately - and sadly predictably, this being a prequel after all - brings them together as the best of friends by the end.

Hopefully, *Monsters University* will be the film to bring Pixar out of its current rut, and you can apply to see it from **July 12th**.

# THE WOLVERINE

Believe it or not, Hugh Jackman is currently the only actor to play a superhero SEVEN times - three *X-Men* movies, two spin-offs (including this newest film), a cameo in *X-Men: First Class*, and will reprise the role of Wolverine in next year's *X-Men: Days of Future Past*.

Before then, he goes solo once more for his sixth outing as the popular mutant, simply called *The Wolverine*.

Promising to be more gripping and dramatic than his previous spin-off, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, the action takes place mostly in oriental Japan and is based on a praised comic story arc co-written by Frank Miller (*Sin City*) so it is already destined to at least look very nice on-screen.

Also looking nice on-screen, aside from Jackman obviously, in director James Mangold's (*Knight and Day*) film are Japanese actors HiroYuki Sanada (*The Last Samurai*), Tao Okamoto, Rila Fukushima (both making their acting



Hugh Jackman's Logan travels to Japan where he becomes vulnerable for the first time in *The Wolverine*

debut), Will Yun Lee (*Die Another Day*) and Brian Tee (*We Were Soldiers*). Other international actors featured in the film are Svetlana Khodchenkova (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*) and Famke Janssen (*Taken*) who briefly reprises her role as Jean Grey.

Not so much a prequel this time round, *The Wolverine* is set after the events of *X-Men: The Last Stand* and Logan/Wolverine (Jackman), now without a home to call his own, is summoned to Japan where

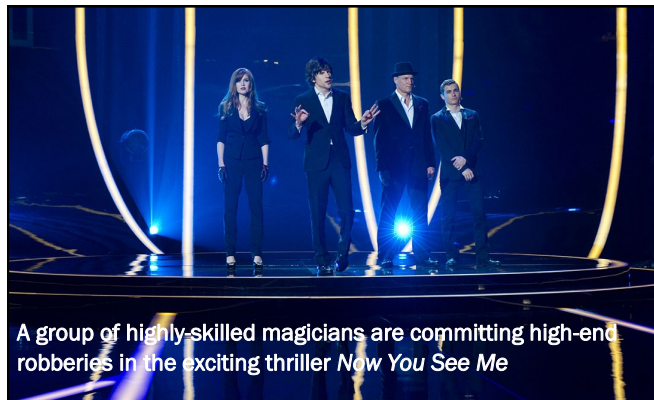
he encounters a mysterious figure from his past. The ensuing fight leaves the indestructible mutant vulnerable for the first time, and as he confronts samurai steel and the struggle with his own immortality, he is pushed to his physical and emotional limits which incidentally makes him more powerful than ever. Sounds like there's a lot going on in Jackman's sixth outing as *The Wolverine*, which is out in cinemas for all to see from **July 26th**.

# NOW YOU SEE ME

Like many great filmmakers, magicians always keep the secrets to their tricks closely to their chest. But if the main crux of a crime investigation depended on solving those tricks, then it's going to take more than a bit of research and belief to figure out just how they did it.

*Now You See Me* invites its audience, as well as certain characters, to figure out the mysteries behind what they're seeing but the answers are not going to be easy to figure out.

With plot twists left, right and center, it seems we're in for a very complex journey as led by director Louis Leterrier (*The Incredible Hulk*) and an all-star cast that includes Jesse Eisenberg (*The Social Network*), Mark Ruffalo (*The Avengers*), Woody Harrelson (*The Hunger Games*), Isla Fisher (*Wedding Crashers*), Dave Franco (*21 Jump Street*), Mélanie Laurent



A group of highly-skilled magicians are committing high-end robberies in the exciting thriller *Now You See Me*

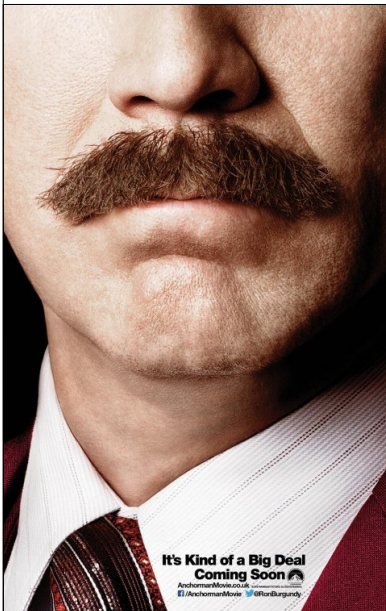
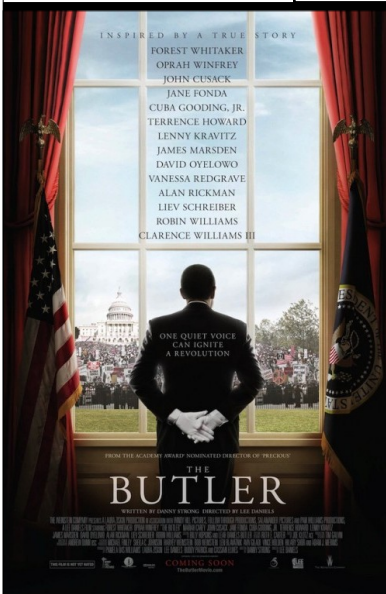
(*Inglourious Basterds*), Common (*Wanted*), Michael Caine (*Harry Brown*) and Morgan Freeman (*The Shawshank Redemption*). The film begins with the mysterious assembling of four magicians - Daniel Atlas (Eisenberg), Henley Reeves (Fisher), Merritt Osbourne (Harrelson) and Jack Wilder (Franco) - who form a group known as the "Four Horsemen" who perform onstage at Las Vegas. It soon transpires, however, that the

group are using their skills to commit daring heists against corrupt businessmen, such as insurance magnate Arthur Tressler (Caine), and then showering the stolen money onto their audiences. An FBI agent, Dylan Rhodes (Ruffalo), is brought in to capture the skilled criminals, who no matter what always stay one step ahead of the law.

*Now You See Me* magics its way into British cinemas on **July 5th**.

## News Round-Up

- *Dumb and Dumber To* is officially given the green light by Universal
- *The Muppets... Again!* is now known as *Muppets Most Wanted*
- Russell Crowe will make his directional debut with WW1 drama *The Water Diviner*
- Shailene Woodley's role as Mary Jane in *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* has been cut, and pushed back to the newly-announced third film
- Sam Taylor-Johnson signs on to direct *Fifty Shades of Grey*
- James Gandolfini (*The Sopranos*) passes away at age 51 after a heart attack
- Robert Downey Jr, will officially return as Iron Man in *The Avengers 2* and 3
- Arnold Schwarzenegger signs on to play a father whose daughter is turning into a zombie in *Maggie*
- *Independence Day 2* has been given a July 3rd, 2015 release date, but Will Smith will not return while Jeff Goldblum and Bill Pullman will be back
- *Star Wars: Episode VII* is confirmed to shoot at Pinewood Studios in early 2014
- Popular boy detective character *Encyclopedia Brown* will get his own film
- Richard Matheson, creator of stories like *I Am Legend* and *Real Steel*, dies aged 87
- Liam Neeson will return for *Taken 3*
- Christopher McQuarrie (Jack Reacher) will write and direct a film adaptation of ITV crime drama *Unforgotten*
- A feature film of *Knight Rider* might be happening, with Brad Copeland (*Arrested Development*) being hired to direct
- Cameron Diaz will play Miss Hannigan in *Annie*
- *Terminator 5* will begin a new trilogy in 2015
- A movie based on *Captain Planet and the Planetees* is being made



# THE INTERNSHIP

Google has taken over the internet, revolutionizing how we search for things online forever.

But is it about to take over the film world?

Since it is placed heavily within the plot of the new comedy *The Internship*, it's a strong indicator that movie-land domination is within its grasp.

But that's not the only big reason to get excited for the film: it once again features the on-screen comedy duo of Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn, both of whom reigned supreme together in *Wedding Crashers* and won over audiences with their apparent chemistry.

Vaughn himself has a lot going on with this film, too. Aside from coming up with the story and co-writing the screenplay, he's also a producer which makes more way for his ideas to shine on the screen (though



Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn fight to stay employed by taking on an internship at Google in *The Internship*

this could go either way...). Directing the film, however, falls to Shawn Levy (*Night at the Museum*) who has also put together a fine supporting cast that includes Rose Byrne (*Bridesmaids*), Max Minghella (*The Social Network*), Joanna Garcia (*American Pie 2*), Jessica Szohr (*Piranha 3D*) and B.J. Novak (*Inglourious Basterds*).

Nick (Wilson) and Billy

(Vaughn) are two salesmen who unceremoniously learn that the company they work for has closed down due to people using the internet. However, they soon learn of a competitive internship at - you guessed it - Google where the two grown men, unfamiliar with today's technology, must compete with hundreds of younger faces for a shot at a job.

*The Internship* begins work on July 5th.

# THE BLING RING

A few years ago, a group of Beverly Hills teenagers broke into the homes of various celebrities such as Paris Hilton, Orlando Bloom, Lindsay Lohan and others, and stole about \$3 million in cash as well as various pieces of clothing and jewellery.

Only Sofia Coppola, the Oscar-winning writer-director behind *Lost in Translation*, could take the real-life tale and turn it into her new movie *The Bling Ring*.

Recently having the honour of opening the Un Certain Regard competition at this year's Cannes Film Festival, it was met with mixed reviews but all critics agreed that it was a powerful message against the young peoples' need for celebrity culture in a disturbing age where social networks and gossip magazines rule supreme.

Taking the biggest reigns in



Sofia Coppola's *The Bling Ring*, starring Emma Watson, sees a group of teenagers rob the rich and famous

Coppola's odyssey is a cast-against-type Emma Watson (*Harry Potter*), while also featuring Taissa Farmiga (*American Horror Story*), Leslie Mann (*Knocked Up*), and Erin Daniels (*A Single Man*). Also, look out for cameos by Kirsten Dunst (*Spider-Man*) and real-life victim Paris Hilton.

Inspired by the factual events that rocked and shocked Hollywood, a group of fame-obsessed teenagers known

as *The Bling Ring*, led by Rebecca (a debuting Katie Chang) and including other young aspiring socialites like Nicki (Watson) and Sam (Farmiga), uses the Internet to track various celebrities' schedules so they can break in to their homes, have fun, and then take off with most of their stuff. Of course, it's not long until the law catches up with them.

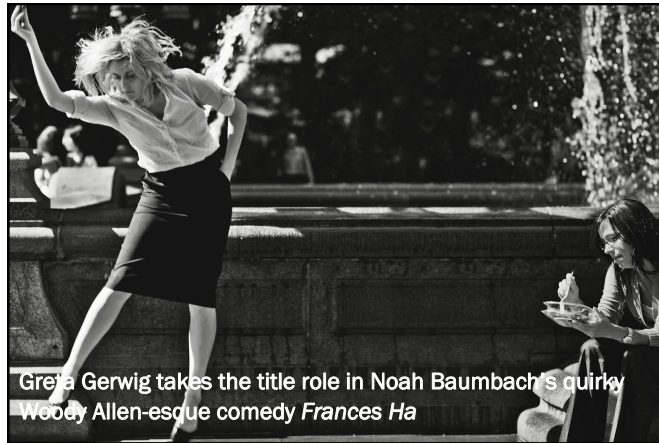
*The Bling Ring* breaks into cinemas from July 5th.

## FRANCES HA

If Woody Allen was still in his glory years (that being around the time he made classics like *Annie Hall*, *Crimes and Misdemeanors* et al), then chances are that he would certainly make a film like *Frances Ha*.

However, while Allen's influence is clearly felt all over this one, it is in fact Noah Baumbach (*The Squid and The Whale*) who is the one behind the camera here, taking cues from a script co-written by himself and the film's star, rising indie darling Greta Gerwig (*Damsels in Distress*, and who previously collaborated with Baumbach in the Ben Stiller comedy-drama *Greenberg*).

Choosing to shoot the film in digital black-and-white (not the only film this month to do so - see below for the other one) to best replicate Allen's work on his classic picture *Manhattan*, the film on the outside looks like it is a lovely callback to the films of



Greta Gerwig takes the title role in Noah Baumbach's quirky Woody Allen-esque comedy *Frances Ha*

the 1970s which thrived on small-ish casts, simple stories about mostly nothing, and vibrant characters making their way through life.

Those also joining Gerwig in the film include Mickey Sumner (in her film debut), Charlotte d'Ambrose (*The Preacher's Wife*) and Adam Driver (*Lincoln*).

The plot is as basic as they come: Frances Harding (Gerwig) is a 27-year-old

dancer living in New York City with her best friend Sophie (Sumner), but when Sophie decides to move out and live with another friend, it sets a chain of events that leave Frances to figure out how to live her life without her best friend always by her side.

*Frances Ha* is set to be one of the year's indie darlings, and you can catch it in cinemas across the country from **July 26th**.



## A FIELD IN ENGLAND

Ben Wheatley, whose name you might recognize as the director of *Down Terrace*, *Kill List* and last year's dark comedy *Sightseers*, has found time to make ANOTHER film - his fourth overall (or fifth, if you like to count his short contribution to horror anthology *The ABCs of Death* in his growing filmography) - but *A Field In England* may turn out to be his most mind-bending outing yet.

Just like his previous films, it was shot on a micro-budget and takes advantage of the gorgeous English landscape it sets itself in. But here, it's a little different: it's Wheatley's first historically-set film, and he's chosen to shoot the film in gothic black-and-white as opposed to the Technicolor method for his previous films.

Its cast is also miniscule, but with a fair amount of gravitas - out of everyone, Reese

Something strange happens when a group of men during the English Civil War come across mushrooms in *A Field In England*

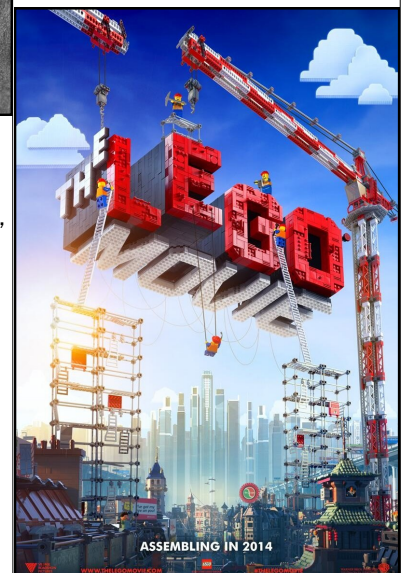


Shearsmith (*The League of Gentlemen*) and Michael Smiley (*Kill List*) are the most known, but the film also features Julian Barratt (*The Mighty Boosh*), Peter Ferdinando (*Snow White and the Huntsman*), Richard Glover (*Sightseers*), Ryan Pope (*Velvet Goldmine*) and Sara Dee (*Kill List*).

*A Field In England* is set during the English Civil War in - you guessed it - a field in England where a small group

of battle deserters stumble across some mushrooms which leads to some strange, psychedelic events.

Also worth noting about the film is that from its release on **July 5th**, you can catch it not only in cinemas but also on DVD, Blu-Ray, free TV, and video on demand - the first home-grown title to be released this way. So, you can catch *A Field In England* literally everywhere and anywhere from that date!



# STILL SHOWING: JUNE



Cloud Atlas

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 01/07/13



Oz: The Great and Powerful

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 01/07/13



Red Dawn

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 08/07/13



Identity Thief

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 15/07/13

June, being the mid-point of the year, had no shortage of exciting releases to end the first six months of 2013 on, and here are some of them.

The 7th saw father-son team Will and Jaden Smith crash-land on an exotic planet in M. Night Shyamalan's *After Earth*; Matt Damon began a relationship with Michael Douglas' Liberace in Steven Soderbergh's final film *Behind The Candelabra*; Michael Shannon portrayed a cold-blooded serial killer in *The Iceman*; famed rock group The Stone Roses got their own film with *The Stone Roses: Made of Stone*; and Audrey Tautou starred in the French drama *Therese Desqueyroux*.

Then, on the 14th, Tina Fey and Paul Rudd made an unlikely couple in rom-com *Admission*; Superman returned to form after seven years away from the multiplex in the highly-anticipated reboot *Man of Steel*; Joss Whedon, in the wake of the success of *The Avengers*, made a much



Superman returned in glorious fashion in the latest on-screen take on the classic superhero, Zack Snyder's *Man of Steel*

smaller adaptation of Shakespeare's classic comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*; and Dan Stevens began his post-Downton career with *Summer in February*.

Up next, on the 21st, Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy reprised their *Before Sunrise* and *Before Sunset* characters Jesse and Celine in *Before Midnight*; the Wayans sent up some recent hand-held horror flicks in *A Haunted House*; Dwayne Johnson went undercover in a drug ring in *Snitch*; and Brad Pitt was at the epicenter of a global zombie outbreak in *World War Z*.

And finally, on the 28th of the month, the super-villain Gru

and his lovable yellow minions were back for another adventure in *Despicable Me 2*; we saw the goings-on in an environmental terrorist group in *The East*; Jason Statham was an ex-soldier hiding in London in *Hummingbird*; Al Pacino, Christopher Walken and Alan Arkin were *Stand Up Guys*; and Seth Rogen and friends experienced the apocalypse in the laugh-out-loud comedy *This Is The End*.

That's all that there was for June 2013, but it's not over yet (well, it is, but not in this issue: for reviews of some of these films, check out pages 8-12)...

# COMING SOON: AUGUST

No doubt about it: this August is going to be MA-HOOSIVE. Don't believe me? Check out what's on offer...

First up, on the 2nd, we have the ghostly horror flick *The Conjuring*; Studio Ghibli is back with their latest anime masterpiece *From Up On Poppy Hill*; Sandra Bullock teams up with Melissa McCarthy to form one hell of a cop duo in *The Heat*; Ryan Gosling re-teams with *Drive* director Nicolas Winding Refn for the ultra-violent *Only God Forgives*; Bruce Willis is one more retired and extremely dangerous in *RED 2*; and the Smurfs are back for another live-action outing in *The Smurfs 2*.

And that's just the first weekend... Then, on the 9th, Steve Coogan brings his most famous character to the big screen in *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa*; Adam Sandler is back with all his friends in comedy sequel *Grown Ups 2*; Johnny Depp is Tonto while Armie Hammer takes the title role in Gore Verbinski's *The Lone Ranger*; and the fantasy sequel *Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters* comes to cinemas.

And it doesn't stop there... The 16th sees Mark Wahlberg and Denzel Washington as two



Johnny Depp is Tonto to Armie Hammer's Lone Ranger in the action-packed Western *The Lone Ranger*

criminals in *2 Guns*; Kick-Ass and Hit-Girl make a triumphant return in the superhero sequel *Kick-Ass 2*; and Disney introduces a world above the world of *Cars* in *Planes*. Think you've had enough? Get a load of this...

Up next, on the 23rd, *District 9* director Neil Blomkamp directs Matt Damon and Jodie Foster in sci-fi epic *Elysium*; Steven Spielberg's biggest hit returns to cinemas in a 3D upgrade for its 20th anniversary - that's right, it's *Jurassic Park 3D*; Amanda Seyfried leads a starry ensemble piece about the world's most famous porn star in *Lovelace*; we are introduced to the newest teen fiction that's known as, *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones*; Jennifer Aniston is part of a fake family in *We're*

*The Millers*; and we see divorce from a child's point of view in *What Maisie Knew*. Finally (and thank goodness, because we can't take much more of this month's epicness), on the 30th, One Direction are given their own concert movie in *One Direction: This Is Us*; Michael Bay directs Mark Wahlberg and Dwayne Johnson in the real-life crime story *Pain and Gain*; a young teen gets a summer job at a water park in the ensemble dramady *The Way, Way Back*; and the acclaimed horror *You're Next* makes its way to cinemas. So many films on offer in August, it appears we're spoiled for choice. But thankfully, it looks like there's always something to look forward to every week, so bring it on!



Robot and Frank

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 15/07/13



G.I. Joe: Retaliation

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 22/07/13



Jack The Giant Slayer

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 22/07/13



Side Effects

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 29/07/13

# REVIEWS

## STAR RATING SYSTEM



JUST DON'T



I WOULDN'T



MEH



WORTH A LOOK



RATHER ENJOYABLE



SEE IT NOW!



**DIRECTOR:** Zack Snyder

**CAST:** Henry Cavill, Amy Adams, Michael Shannon, Kevin Costner, Diane Lane, Laurence Fishburne, Russell Crowe, Antje Traue, Ayelet Zurer, Harry Lennix, Christopher Meloni, Richard Schiff

**RUNNING TIME:** 148 mins

**CERTIFICATE:** 12A

### ONE-SENTENCE PLOT

Clark Kent (Cavill) grows up with incredible superpowers, and must learn to use them in order to become Superman and defeat an alien threat...

### NOW FOR THE REVIEW...

If Marvel is succulent fast food – not the best thing for you, but it still satisfies – then DC Comics is the posh gourmet meal. But while the food on offer at the latter can occasionally have your taste buds going into overload (say, Christopher Nolan's *Batman* trilogy) they usually tend to be hollow, dry meals with extra, unneeded fat on them and an overall unsatisfactory feeling in the mouth which, unfortunately, also rings true for the chef's latest concoction.

In case you hadn't surmised from the pretentious metaphors, Zack Snyder's reboot of the *Superman* franchise is a crushing disappointment for anyone expecting something along the lines of Nolan's *Dark Knight* trilogy.

Whereas those films had more of a balance between action and character, the swing here clearly favours one over the other and, as a result, the film fails to give the audience a connection to any of these characters. One good example of this is during the extended climax of the film: during the destruction of Metropolis, Daily Planet editor Perry White (a wasted Laurence Fishburne) tries to rescue a woman trapped underneath debris and from his struggle it is clear that she means a great deal to him, and vice versa. We have no idea who she is by this point, not even a previous scene to introduce her to us, so why do the filmmakers think we should

care about someone that we don't know? It's the same problem with everyone, from Lois Lane (Amy Adams, disappointingly lacklustre for someone otherwise lovely) to adoptive parents Jonathan and Martha Kent (Kevin Costner and Diane Lane, arguably the best elements of the film but still robbed of precious extended screen time). The film expects us to believe that they just exist in this world, without hints of personality or interest to keep us going, and that should suffice to make way for the constant action. They appear to be greatly mistaken.

Not even Clark Kent/Kal-El himself can benefit from being the centre of the film, since we are never given any real scenes that show more of his inner struggle with his past and his character doesn't even change throughout the course of the film. The film's best scene involves a young Clark hiding in a school cupboard after a strange spell in his classroom – with an interesting take on his x-ray vision superpower – while Martha Kent gently talks him out of his fear. The reason it works is because viewers can draw comparisons with children having autism, and how frustrating it can be for them to grow up, like Clark, differently. However, the film is so dedicated to NOT having a scene like that again and a chance to truly give him more personality than the final product is sorely wasted. However, you cannot fault Henry Cavill for any of this; after all he does a fine job with what little is given to him. There are, however, two main culprits that deserve a shared amount of blame: writer David S. Goyer, and director Zack Snyder.

Goyer's script is absolutely atrocious, muddled with a non-linear structure filled with constant flashbacks and with not an ounce of light-hearted humour to it. Some of the dialogue almost boards on M. Night Shyamalan levels of awkward – Lois Lane literally introduces herself as "a Pulitzer Prize award-winning journalist," the kind of expository forced writing found exclusively in student scripts – while the characters, as stated, are heavily sidelined for the constant action. Also, say whatever you

want about Bryan Singer's attempted "reboot" *Superman Returns*, but at least it gave us something new and different (as well as actual character). Instead, here Goyer has stuck with the origin story that everyone and their grandmothers knows off by heart, so almost every beat that they want to come across as a shock instead becomes incredible predictable. Goyer may have written Nolan's *Batman* films, but don't forget he also did *Blade Trinity* and *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance*. He's perhaps not the safest choice for something on a grand scale like *Man of Steel*.

Snyder, meanwhile, has more crimes to answer for. *Man of Steel* fits right in with the rest of his back catalogue of "style over substance" flicks: all visual wonder, no story or character. But even here, the visual wonder is severely lacking. Every single shot uses the shaky-cam technique, rendering the film near-unwatchable (seriously, even *The Hunger Games* would get motion sickness) especially during its multiple action scenes. Speaking of which, although Snyder should be commended for resisting the urge to include his trademark slow-motion shots at all in this picture, most of this action quickly becomes boring and confusing (not exactly helped by its shaky-cam, which enables us to not even see it at times) which, for something as high-brow as this, is incredibly frustrating.

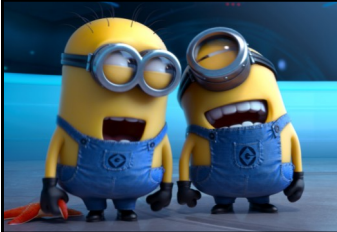
Instead of saving itself after other misguided movies like *Green Lantern*, DC Comics has now written itself into an even tighter corner than before which, if *Man of Steel* is anything to go by, will become even tighter when the Justice League finally comes into existence.

### OVERALL VERDICT

If *Man of Steel* was reworked in the script and directing department, then we could have had something decent. As it is, it is one of the most disappointing blockbusters in recent memory.







**DIRECTORS:** Pierre Coffin, Chris Renaud  
**CAST:** Steve Carell, Russell Brand, Kristen Wiig, Miranda Cosgrove, Benjamin Bratt, Steve Coogan, Ken Jeong  
**RUNNING TIME:** 98 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** U  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 Gru (Carell) is recruited by the Anti-Villain League to help them stop a new villain named Antonio (Bratt)...  
**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**

Be honest with yourselves – the only reason you're seeing *Despicable Me 2* is because of those little yellow Minions. Who cares about what the real main characters are getting up to, as long as they're on-screen, right?  
 Well, if you're expecting plenty of scenes with them, then you should definitely benefit from their severely-expanded role here. In what capacity they serve the plot shall remain unspoiled here, but their ability to steal every single scene they're in is still intact and should make audience members both young and old giggle themselves something silly.  
 Whether they can work as the true focus of a film, namely in next year's spin-off movie, remains to be seen but for now they're a lot of fun to watch.

**DIRECTOR:** Marc Forster  
**CAST:** Brad Pitt, Mireille Enos, James Badge Dale, Matthew Fox, Peter Capaldi, David Morse  
**RUNNING TIME:** 110 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 A UN employee (Pitt) travels the globe in search of a cure for a growing zombie epidemic...  
**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**

The undead has been accepted into the mainstream now, to the point that we now have a zombie film with a Roland Emmerich-sized budget and scope to it all. However, it also harbours his usual tropes such as underdeveloped characters, ludicrous plot lines, and not as much a balance of style and substance as it thinks.  
 Emmerich is not to blame for this, since this is not even his movie. It's director Marc Forster at the helm here, as if he hadn't got the memos on his clumsy directing of *Quantum of Solace*, specifically in the action department. Like that film, *World War Z* quickly gets the ball rolling with an explosive sequence in Philadelphia not five minutes into the film. From there, it's a tense, action-packed first act that moves along as fast as a Benny Hill chase. Unfortunately, it does not leave any room to get to know Brad Pitt or his

As for the rest of the film? Well, it also happens to be a lot of fun as well.  
 Like the first film, it serves to be harmless family entertainment with slapstick reminiscent of the old *Looney Tunes* cartoons and a simple enough story for anyone to follow easily. But one could argue that in the struggle to make the sequel bigger, it hasn't left much room for the large amount of heart that the first film provided. It's there, make no mistake, but the focus of that film was of the protagonist Gru (voiced once more by Steve Carell, silly undefinable accent and all) having a change of heart and becoming a father while leaving behind his villainous ways. This time, his main emotional journey is of him finding a mother for his daughters and thus beginning a romance with new character Lucy Wilde (a fun, if overbearing, Kristen Wiig). It cannot help but feel lesser in comparison, since the ability to connect with a child is more powerful than with another fellow adult. It is still a nice little character arc, but just not as strong as before.  
 Primarily as a kid's film, it tends to cut corners in some parts which can annoy some of the more analytical viewers. For instance, the idea of an "Anti-Villain League" is set-up, but we are never given a chance to see

family, other than they exist and that they're a family. Personal dynamics? Inner struggles? All the stuff that made the characters in *The Walking Dead* so interesting and memorable? Thrown out the window here, because according to the filmmakers they only exist and nothing else. Forster, like with *Bond*, forgets the key element that makes an action scene work: we have to care for the character caught up in this scenario. We cannot do that if you only dedicate two minutes to their normal home life and to see who they are aside from the obvious archetypes.  
 This blockbuster has been riddled with various production troubles, and it shows in certain places. For instance, the third act – re-shot with a revised script by Damon Lindelof and then Drew Goddard – feels like a completely different movie. After scenes set in Philadelphia, New Jersey, South Korea and Israel, the movie finally ends up at a research facility in, of all places, Wales. Give them a mark for a unique location in a Hollywood blockbuster, but the running through corridors and slower-moving zombies (as opposed to the earlier, sprinting kind) make it look like any other low-budget zombie film, in complete contrast to the bigger set pieces earlier on in the film. Makes you wonder: where on Earth DID that \$200 million budget go to in the end?

what they can do in action rather than sit in their secret lair and provide exposition for our characters. It is also highly predictable with the eventual reveal of the villain. The way they are making it so obvious, you pray for there to be an unexpected twist to come out of nowhere, but instead we get exactly what they are throwing at you. And it doesn't help that this particular villain is rather weak – no major motive other than to just take over the world, and he is defeated incredibly easily in a final battle that is as anti-climactic as they come. However, appreciation should be given to Benjamin Bratt, literally a last-minute replacement for Al Pacino, for taking on a role so quickly and enthusiastically that you can't even tell he was brought in at the eleventh hour.  
 Thankfully, the film is decent enough to satisfy any child viewer and also entertain their parents with just how silly and – yes – cartoonish everything feels. And in a time when most cartoon films don't actually ACT like cartoons, this – like the first film, of which this sequel is on par with – is a refreshing anecdote.  
**OVERALL VERDICT**  
 Although a tiny fraction of its heart is lost, *Despicable Me 2* offers laughs and joy for the entire family.



Certainly not in the special effects department, particularly the crowds of zombies climbing a large wall in Israel like an ant hill which looks like amateur work at points (i.e. you can tell when they're CG'd). Not only that, but it seems they couldn't spend a decent amount on fake blood, resulting in this being the most bloodless zombie film ever. They even digitally removed any traces of red, instead leaving some sort of black mark where it should in fact be. For a zombie movie, that's extraordinarily incompetent.  
 If anything, the rest of the budget must have been used for two things. The first is to make star/producer Brad Pitt as Messiah-like as possible (surviving every impossible obstacle, literally walking through waves of zombies unharmed? He has risen!), and the second is to messily pave the way for the obvious sequel. Taking a cue from *Prometheus*, it seems to want to save the better stuff for the future. It had better, because this is not the best start.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
*World War Z* is ironically as lifeless as its reanimated corpses, with stock characters and clumsy directing dominating what should have been a cool mega-budget blockbuster with zombies. You want "braaaaaains", look elsewhere this summer.





**DIRECTOR:** M. Night Shyamalan  
**CAST:** Will Smith, Jaden Smith, Zoe Kravitz, Sophie Okonedo  
**RUNNING TIME:** 100 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 12A  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**

In the near future, a father and son (Smiths Sr. and Jr.) crash-land on an abandoned, dangerous Earth...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**

After *Earth* opens with Jaden Smith lying wounded on the ground, apparently seconds to death before we have even begun the picture. If that isn't a metaphor for the remaining hour and a half of this painfully dull sci-fi adventure, then what is?

Nowadays, it seems that anything M. Night Shyamalan touches is almost as DOA as Smith Jr in those opening moments. But at least with stinkers like *The Happening* and *The Last Airbender*, there was much unintentional hilarity for one to enjoy – anyone going in to this film expecting something along the same lines of the hot-dog man from *The Happening* or the over-the-top tai-chi moves in *The Last Airbender* will be gravely disappointed.

The film takes itself far, far too seriously which, as a result, alienates the audience with its slow, concentrated pretentiousness as well as its boring father-son

narrative. Not even the visuals which dominate most of the film have any imagination put into them and are just the generic wildlife images we can easily look up in *National Geographic* magazines.

The film is an even bigger failure when you realise that one of Hollywood's most powerful people was a key factor in everything, and even he cannot inject life into the product. Will Smith, in what is essentially a rare supporting role, is completely sans charisma as an emotionally-distant father to a whiny Jaden Smith, who appears to be stuck on Shia LaBeouf mode whenever he is front and centre for much of the second half. The dynamic between Smiths Sr and Jr that worked in *The Pursuit of Happyness* appears to have evaporated here, because neither comes off as sympathetic and heroic, nor do we find ourselves rooting for them to succeed and be reunited. This is due to the complete lack of emotion in their delivering of awkward and clunky dialogue mostly courtesy of Shyamalan, which makes it impossible for the audience to connect with them or even care about them. This is most evident in one overdrawn scene where Smith Sr tells a story to Smith Jr about a significant event in his life – it is handled with no enthusiasm to make us believe it had a profound

effect on him, and an attempt to try and establish some emotional connectivity is too little, too late. We are basically watching *Star Trek* if the entire crew was replaced by the emotionless Vulcans.

The father-son dynamic, which more or less anchors the film (albeit poorly), is one of the many cheesy and contrived plot devices in the film. There is another instance where Smith Jr finds himself in an enlarged bird's nest – as the film explains, every creature inhabiting the planet has evolved to significant levels including size, apparently – and fights off a pack of lions with help coming from a large bird. Said bird is shown later to actually rescue and blanket him under its wings when he is freezing to death. Both are as every bit as silly and stupid as they sound, and that is only skimming the surface of Shyamalan's latest epic fail of a movie.

**OVERALL VERDICT**

A boring narrative, unlikable characters, wooden performances and lazy direction are elements now of the norm for M. Night Shyamalan, but the real failure is of Will Smith and his boy not delivering the expected summer blockbuster entertainment - now THAT'S a twist ending to get your mind around!



**DIRECTORS:** Seth Rogen, Evan Goldberg  
**CAST:** Seth Rogen, James Franco, Jonah Hill, Jay Baruchel, Danny McBride, Craig Robinson, Michael Cera, Emma Watson, Jason Segal, Paul Rudd, Rihanna, Christopher Mintz-Plassé, Aziz Ansari  
**RUNNING TIME:** 106 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**

A group of actors hole themselves up when the apocalypse comes to Los Angeles...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**

It opens on a shot of Seth Rogen (playing "himself") waiting in an airport as some passer-by recognises him and calls him out with positive intentions. It ends with him – avoiding spoilers here - in a certain divine situation. What may sound like the world's biggest vanity project this side of *Moonwalker* is anything but – he, like every other participant in *This Is The End*, is sending himself up to the highest degree with no caring for how unpleasant he comes off to viewers.

It's part of what makes the film work, just the right amount of self-deprecating humour without coming off as being smug or pretentious while also acknowledging that some of your favourite actors, be they Jonah Hill or James Franco, might in

fact not be everything you imagined and are instead a bunch of dicks.

These bunch of dicks – Rogen, Hill, Franco, Jay Baruchel, Craig Robinson and Danny McBride – are our main focus for the movie after an extended and surprisingly gruesome sequence of various celebrities meeting their makers when the Apocalypse comes to Beverly Hills. Their struggle to stay safe within the walls of James Franco's ridiculously-artsy house, complete with a penis-shaped statue, makes up the body of the film which, after a good first act including the previously-mentioned crazy sequence, turns into an awkward, episodic mix of hit-and-miss jokes.

Most of them work whenever they can, but others are extended to the point of annoyance due to how unfunny they are. We do not, for instance, need to hear the details of Danny McBride's self-pleasuring after James Franco finds one of his magazines soiled. We could perhaps do without the pointless introduction then departure of Emma Watson (though it is nice to see her stretching her limits by appearing in what is basically a stoner comedy). Rogen and co-director Evan Goldberg might have needed to give the film a little more of a polish in the editing room to ensure it runs a little smoother than it is right now.

But for their first film as co-directors, they've done some pretty good work. They seem to have mastered the use of the jump-scare and how it should come at the least likely moment. When the Apocalypse abruptly starts, there's no build-up, it just starts during the middle of a normal conversation; same goes for when characters are suddenly attacked by a demonic monster in an abandoned house. Not only that, but their high status in Hollywood has snared them some great cameos to appear in their film – highlights include Michael Cera, going against type as a coke-snorting, sex-addled party animal; and the surprise unveiling of a gimpy which you truly need to see to believe (though it shall be said, HUGE props to someone like that to wear that humiliating costume and completely be a certain someone's bitch).

In short, they seem to have started off well and they should be fine with whatever project they come up with next. But how can they possibly top the Apocalypse for a topic for a movie? No idea, but if it doesn't feature any more jokes about Danny McBride pleasuring himself, all should be well.

**OVERALL VERDICT**

While not perfect and not always funny, *This Is The End* is a good start for the career of director Seth Rogen.





**DIRECTOR:** Richard Linklater  
**CAST:** Ethan Hawke, Julie Delpy  
**RUNNING TIME:** 109 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 Nine years on from *Before Sunset*, Jesse (Hawke) and Celine (Delpy) are now a couple on holiday in Greece...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 Who would have thought that a small film with just two people walking and talking – no explosions, no car chases, nothing of the sort – would dominate the entire summer blockbuster season?

Make no mistake about it, *Before Midnight* is light years ahead of any of the much bigger films this summer (so far, anyway), and will certainly leave much more of an impact on you.

But there's a catch. Watching the first two films, *Before Sunrise* and *Before Sunset*, before watching this third entry is not only extremely recommended, but required. That way, this film's raw emotion and powerhouse writing – from a script written by Richard Linklater and stars Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy – adds even more layers to its already complex ideals. For instance, Delpy's Celine is revealed during the first two films to aspire to be a self-proclaimed "strong, independent woman," a goal which is now

threatened by her new role as wife to Hawke's Jesse and mother to twin daughters, and her feeling of confinement to the limited role of "housewife". Jesse using her likeness for a love interest character in his books does not help matters either, and a scene where she is asked to co-sign his book because they see her as the actual character is uncomfortable for us to watch as it is for her to commit to. It is as if she is signing away her struggle for independence at that point, and she is not having any of it.

That scene directly leads to what is the ultimate set-piece of the movie, a confrontation in a hotel room. It is here, in all its glory, that the film and the trilogy reaches its nail-biting climax that asks a very simple, but gut-wrenching question: have these two people, who we have watched fall in love over one night in the first film and then have a heart-warming reunion in the second one, simply fallen out of love with each other? Watching them in this heated argument, ending with Celine delivering the final soul-crushing blow, is perhaps the most heart-breaking thing imaginable, especially with the romantic contexts of the previous two films. If you have watched both these films, you will have fallen in love with these two perfect soul mates as they themselves have

fallen in love, so to now see them at a pivotal point in their relationship it's almost unwatchable because of the emotional impact it is having on you. When the film eventually ends on an ambiguous note, it will leave you praying for another film in nine years just to see if they have recovered and are still in adoration of one another. It should come as no shock that Hawke and Delpy deliver career-best performances here (particularly in the aforementioned scene), but Linklater should be commended as well for how well he can coordinate a scene. At the beginning, there is a long, almost-uninterrupted shot of the family driving along the Greek coast which, of course, is dedicated to just Jesse and Celine talking like we are used to them doing. When the shot does briefly cut away to the gorgeous-looking Greek ruins, you'll actually want it to cut back to the shot of them, still talking. If this proves anything, it's that no matter how nice everything else looks, there is nothing more beautiful than life and reality itself.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
 Forget big explosions, forego fancy visual effects: *Before Midnight* is without a doubt the most exciting, most emotional experience of the summer, and the year as well.



**DIRECTOR:** Steven Soderbergh  
**CAST:** Michael Douglas, Matt Damon, Dan Aykroyd, Rob Lowe, Debbie Reynolds  
**RUNNING TIME:** 118 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 An exploration of the troubled six-year relationship between Liberace (Douglas) and the much younger Scott Thorson (Damon)...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 "Because it is too gay," is the apparent reason for Steven Soderbergh's final film as director not getting a wide release in the US as it has done in Europe (it has since aired on American TV channel HBO). This should provoke great furore for three very good reasons.

The first is that the film, on its own, is truly excellent. Part of this is due to Soderbergh knowing the right mood to set for the right scene, a welcome attribute in modern-day filmmaking and a reminder that he will certainly be missed in the field (though one suspects he shall return eventually). Any scene with Liberace – or "Lee" as he likes to be called in this film – performing onstage is delightfully camp and upbeat, while other sections that show Scott Thorson's drug-fuelled paranoia are shot in blurred, uncomfortable close-ups. Like with last year's *Magic*

*Mike*, Soderbergh understands the differences between the light antics of the on-stage show and the grittier moments behind the scenes. They balance out evenly, which makes it a more enjoyable film to watch. But it's still "too gay" for the big studios, clearly frightened of the possible content.

Which brings us to the second reason: for a film about a homosexual romance with large hints of flamboyancy, it is surprisingly tame. It is possible that certain parts may have been snipped for the British release, but even then the material seems safer than a bag full of kittens. Any shot of our two male lovers engaged in intercourse is handled delicately without venturing anywhere near exploitation, and it is handled like any other heterosexual on-screen relationship. So much of that comes from the two lead performances: Michael Douglas is unbelievably good as Lee himself, especially so given his recent cancer scare; and Matt Damon excels as the wide-eyed lover who gradually turns entitled and drug-addled whilst under Lee's influence. It is a shame neither are eligible for Oscars next year – though an Emmy/Golden Globe sweep is never off the table – because not only do their passion and dedication to their respective on-screen couple of the year so far,

but their ability to play everything so straight – pun both intended and not intended – with dignity and fresh respect deserves to be highly rewarded. The mixture of well-handled filmmaking and great performances create a film that keeps itself firmly on the ground whereas it could have been completely blown out of proportion in the wrong hands. If that had occurred, the criticisms of "too gay" would have been brought on more by itself.

The third and final reason is fairly simple: the studios seemingly rejected *Behind The Candelabra* for no good reason. This is astounding - gay culture have been more accepted in media than ever before in films like *Brokeback Mountain* and shows like *Modern Family*, and in real-life it is becoming more and more legal for gay marriages and adoption - so what was it about this film that got them frightened? The mystery continues, but it is clear that if major Hollywood players think that something as tame, powerful and well put-together as this film will not fly with audiences, then that is "too gay" for words.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
 An entertaining, dramatic and well-acted romance that deserves to be seen in an era of rising equality for gay couples everywhere.





**DIRECTOR:** Joss Whedon  
**CAST:** Amy Acker, Alexis Denisof, Nathan Fillion, Clark Gregg, Reed Diamond, Fran Kranz, Ashley Johnson  
**RUNNING TIME:** 108 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 12A  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 Beatrice (Acker) and Benedick (Denisof) are in a war of words with each other, but they might actually fall for each other...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 This might stand as one of the smallest-scale adaptations of a major Shakespeare play yet – shot on a micro-budget in just under two weeks at Whedon's own California residence, keep in mind – but it ironically comes off as larger and much grander BECAUSE of its limitations in production.

To even juggle a new version of the playwright's comedy while focusing on one of the biggest films ever made is highly commendable, and one has to wonder if at any point he collapsed under all this weight and broke down. No signs of such show here, for it shows that he has as much a tongue for the Bard's words as he does for everything else. Modernising the play through his adapted screenplay, he ensures that Shakespeare's original dialogue is kept intact at the risk of alienating

the uncultured members of the audience (though why the uncultured are watching a Shakespeare adaptation in the first place, we shall never know). It's a risky move but, like every other modernised Shakespeare adaptation out there, it pays off because it's still the timeless story that everyone knows and loves. However, parts of the transition are not made entirely clear. For instance, the characters Don Pedro and the villainous Don John, both Princes in the original text, are shown to be of high importance, so much so that security is sometimes placed outside their doors. This version does not clarify what roles they are meant to be taking in the modern day. Whether they're politicians or film stars is anyone's guess, but perhaps more of an understanding might have been appreciative.

The play is, at its heart and centre, a romantic comedy and Whedon takes full advantage of both genres to make something fun and memorable, especially with main protagonists Benedick (a charming Alexis Denisof) and Beatrice (Amy Acker, who displays an outstanding talent for both comedy and drama). The scenes of them individually listening in on their friends' manipulative conversations about one's feelings for the other have

always been a prime source for directors to display their comedic chops, and Whedon is no different. Beatrice, for example, literally falls down the stairs at the very mention of Benedick's name, which is every bit as funny as it sounds thanks to the adorable Acker's timing and Whedon's direction. But when the couple eventually starts coming together, the camera captures them in a sort of spotlight position that echoes the romantic nature of *Casablanca* (the black-and-white filming technique makes this comparison look more natural). The funny thing is, a story as widely known as *Much Ado About Nothing* is actually rather small and private if one thinks about it. Any successful adaptation needs to reflect this as best as possible, to perhaps show that the biggest dramas do not necessarily have to have a large scale to it. Thankfully, Whedon has figured out the key directorial hint that Kenneth Branagh, for one, might have overlooked with his adaptation – less is more.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
 Joss Whedon has delivered a healthy new version of Shakespeare's classic play which will stay with you much more than Keanu Reeves' terrible diction in Branagh's version.



**DIRECTOR:** Ariel Vroman  
**CAST:** Michael Shannon, Winona Ryder, Chris Evans, Ray Liotta, James Franco, David Schwimmer, Stephen Dorff, Erin Cummings, Robert Davi  
**RUNNING TIME:** 105 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 The life of Richard Kuklinski (Shannon), the notorious contract killer and family man...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 Michael Shannon is quickly becoming one of today's most celebrated character actors - aside from faring in much larger Hollywood products such as *Man of Steel*, he is also doing some powerhouse work in smaller films like this one. However, *The Iceman* falls into the same trap that most biopics nowadays tend to fall into: the lead performance is by far and away the best thing in an otherwise muddled telling of someone's life. Make no mistake, Shannon delivers the goods as Richard Kuklinski, the psychopathic contract killer who murdered over 200 people in his prime. A quiet and appropriately cold performance is what it takes for him to dominate every frame of the film, and every time we see him – even as he goes through ridiculous hairstyle after ridiculous hairstyle – he draws all the attention from the viewer.

Perhaps that was a deliberate ploy to distract them from all the other, more obvious faults of the film. Even though he is on his third film as director, Ariel Vroman still has some of the characteristics of a first-timer. Some of his style choices may seem experimental – an early confrontation scene with Kuklinski and Ray Liotta, typecast as yet another gangster, is shot in the shaky cam style – but they don't belong in these sort of scenes and distract the audience rather than creating further suspense. He also attempts to juggle with both sides to the story – Kuklinski as a murderer, and Kuklinski as a married family man – but cannot give either of them enough focus to keep them in the air for long, and as a result some elements feel unnaturally rushed or forced. For instance, the problem with an early montage of his beginnings as a contract killer is BECAUSE it's a montage. The need to move things along more more swiftly is understandable, but it does not give the audience enough time to see what he can do in action. Other characters talk about how talented he is at what he does, but we hardly ever see his talent to judge for ourselves.

The uneven pace is not helped by some lazy editing, which can damage a film like this with parallel

narratives. Certain scenes of our anti-hero carrying out his killings are awkwardly spliced with other scenes of him at home with his wife (an affecting if useless Winona Ryder) and two daughters. While it creates an interesting contrast, it only proves the inability of the director to balance the two perfectly if our attention constantly shifts from one to another without any indication of where to stick to. One later scene meant to cause tension is when one of Kuklinski's daughters becomes involved when Liotta's paranoid crime boss puts a gun to his head. The tension is sadly lost through the choice of editing, and no drama is created when it is solved with no bloodshed to either party. Vroman must take cues from other directors to make such tension actually feel tension, because he hasn't seemed to have grasped it just yet. Perhaps what this film needed was one final polish to reorganise itself, so at least the final product won't look as clumsy as it already sadly is.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
*The Iceman* is an appropriate title, because while Michael Shannon gives a incredibly powerful and strong performance, the amateurish direction and editing leave you with a cold feeling inside once you leave the auditorium.



# UK Film Release Dates

## JULY

### 5TH

- The Bling Ring
- Chasing Mavericks
- A Field In England
- The Internship
- Now You See Me

### 12TH

- The Deep
- Monsters University
- Pacific Rim
- Trap for Cinderella
- We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks

### 19TH

- Breathe In
- Easy Money
- Eden
- The Frozen Ground
- Wadjda
- The World's End

### 26TH

- Frances Ha
- The Wolverine

## AUGUST

### 2ND

- The Conjuring
- From Up On Poppy Hill
- The Heat
- Only God Forgives
- Red 2
- The Smurfs 2

### 9TH

- Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa
- Grown Ups 2
- The Lone Ranger
- Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters

### 16TH

- 2 Guns
- Kick-Ass 2
- Planes

### 23RD

- Elysium
- Jurassic Park 3D
- Lovelace
- The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones
- We're The Millers
- What Maisie Knew

### 30TH

- One Direction: This Is Us
- Pain and Gain
- The Way, Way Back
- You're Next

All release dates are correct as of time of press.

## SEPTEMBER

### 6TH

- About Time
- Any Day Now
- No One Lives
- Riddick
- White House Down

### 13TH

- The Artist and The Model
- In A World...
- Insidious 2
- Justin and the Knights of Valour
- Rush
- Thanks For Sharing

### 20TH

- Blue Jasmine
- The Call
- Cold Comes The Night
- Diana
- Hawking
- R.I.P.D

### 27TH

- Austenland
- Escape Plan
- Filth
- Runner Runner

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