

At The Movies...

Outbreak: Not a "flick" for the hypochondriacs

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GRISLY APOCALYPSE A LA MODE

Ingredients:

- a deadly 48-hour virus (found in Motaba, Africa)
- a couple of well-known actors (Dustin Hoffman, Rene Russo, Morgan Freeman)
- and half a tablespoon of cheap action

Directions:

Take ordinary, small-town suburb; add virus. Blend well. Add actors-with-really-pathetic-lines on top. Sprinkle cheap action liberally over mix. Bake for two and a half hours. Viola--OUTBREAK. Serve to a-willing-to-believe-anything-audience. For a more desired effect, serve with Buttered popcorn and Junior Mints.

This is definitely not a flick for the hypochondriacs.

Army medic Col. Sam Daniels (Hoffman) discovers a deadly virus that leaves its victims with bleeding eyes and disgusting sores covering their entire bodies, all occurring in less than 48 hours (and yes, they do show gory close-ups). There is major resistance from the U.S. Government who is trying to keep the virus, which is quickly wiping out the entire town's existence, a big secret because of selfish reasons (which just proves that the government is one, big baby). Daniels dashes to the scene, and along with other dedicated medics--including his recent ex-wife Robby (Russo), he tries to discover an antibody for a serum that will hopefully cure the disease.

Suddenly, the situation drastically worsens when they realize the virus has become air-born, infecting hundreds more victims with a simple sneeze. One victim spreads the virus at a movie theater with his coughing (needless to say, my fellow movie-watchers kept their coughing to a minimum after witnessing this scene). Cart-loads of

people are being hauled off to be buried six-feet under, and even more are running to the hospital. Then Daniels' close friend\doctor becomes infected by a tear in his protective body suit where the virus slipped through. Soon after, Daniels' ex-wife, whom he still cares deeply for, has become infected by an accidental needle puncture wound. He is determined to find the cure; it has become his personal war.

Daniels and Major Salt (a young doctor played by Cuba Gooding, Jr.) proceed to go on a wild goose-chase for a monkey, which is the original carrier of the virus. If they find the infected monkey, then an antibody could easily be remedied. Weaving through the sky in a helicopter, they try to escape the hounding government, which has been ordered to arrest Daniels. The government has asked the President permission to blow up the entire town so that the disease will be wiped out entirely, including the hundreds of citizens still living (conveniently leaving out the part about the possibility of finding a cure if the monkey is found). The plane carrying the bomb is sent, heading towards its target, the only obstacle being Daniels and Salt in their speedy helicopter.

The ending is predictable; the bomb is stopped, the monkey is found--along with a cure, the town is saved, and, of course, Boy gets Girl. The end.

It wasn't that I didn't like the movie; it was pretty good if you were able to suffer through the monosyllabic dialogue and the cheezy action stunts. One interesting fact: Hoffman, deathly afraid of heights due to a previous incident in his career, sucked his guts in and did his own stunts, though I won't stress the fact that all it involved was a simple jump to a padded boat with a tarp there to cushion the fall. It's a simple movie to sit through--arguably worth the Lincoln it takes to get in the movie theater, but don't bother spending any more bucks for seconds. Wait until it comes on ABC.

Yun: ☹

Chris Theokas
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There was this small California town that was just moving along through its daily business, and then wouldn't you know it, a virus hits. And this virus did more than shut down the school for five days. No, this one shut down the town and brought the military in to watch over everyone.

"Outbreak" is a good movie if you aren't looking to expend a lot of brain power. People get sick all over the place and bleed from sores that appear all over their bodies, and they cry blood, and when you cut them open to see inside, all there is left is liquid where their organs were. But that part doesn't get shown.

There is, of course, the rebel-type hero, Col. Daniels (Hoffman), who defies orders to go to California to save the day. There is his ex-wife, Robby (Russo), who gets to see the liquid insides of a victim, and then there is the rookie doctor, Salt (Gooding) who never saw a drop of blood or an ounce of pus in his life, but hey, he can fly a helicopter rather well. With all this, and a little more, "Outbreak" turns into an exciting, thriller-novel type movie.

At the opening of the movie you get to learn about a virus that was spreading among mercenary soldiers in Africa, during a war in the 60's. The military's answer to their cry for help was a really big bomb. Then we cut to the United States in the present day and get to see a laboratory where there are viruses that make Brevard's flu look like a case of mild hay fever; viruses like Lassa (whatever that is) and the killer of the movie, the Motaba Ebola Virus!

In the course of the film you get to see the military blow up a civilian truck in an attempt to keep the virus contained, and you get to see Daniels uncover a vile, military plot to blow up the town so that nobody has to take

responsibility for the mess that the virus made.

There are some unbelievable parts, like, how did Major Salt out-fly the "best damn pilot in the Army?" And why do they use a little girl as bait

to catch the carrier monkey? Why indeed, but then again, who cares, have fun.

Daniels gets closer to his ex towards the end of the movie, but I doubt if it would last. They would need another deadly virus to keep them together, and that would be unlikely to happen, unless they gross enough to make the producer think of a sequel.

Daniels loses a friend to the virus after there is a tear in the guy's protective suit, and there are tense moments when Robby gets pricked by an infected needle. But what are you going to do against a virus that destroys cells one by one and leaves a soupy mess in your torso?

Well, Daniels goes into overdrive, stealing a helicopter, hunting down a monkey that could save the day, forcefully taking over a T.V. station to tell the world that there is a monkey to be caught, all to save a little Californian town, and his ex-wife. All in a day's work for Daniels.

It was exciting. It was a great plot and decent dialogue. It had really neat medical equipment that made odd noises, and so on.

This wasn't the greatest movie ever. It sure was better than its rival "Crisis in the Hot Zone," which never left the production stage because of ego trips between two actors. But what can you do? If you miss this one in the theaters, go see it on video.

Interesting Note: The Ebola virus kept in Reston, Virginia, almost escaped from the compound where it was stored and nearly caused its own, real-life version of "Outbreak".

Theokas: ☺

