

Review: 'Unstoppable'

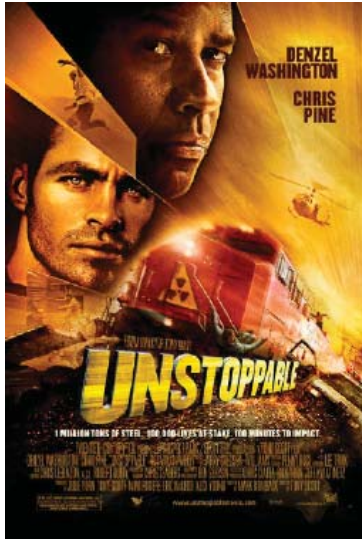
By Alex McCracken
Staff Writer

Tony Scott is a lot of things. It used to be that he was just Ridley Scott's little brother. Then he seemed to be Denzel Washington's best friend outside of Spike Lee, but now I know him as the director of "Unstoppable" which is easily the best movie he's ever made.

"Man on Fire" definitely had its critics. I personally was completely absorbed in the cinematography and the escalating conspiracy in that film, but yes, I did have to turn my brain off a little to keep things fluid. In the case of "Unstoppable," I found myself doing that far less, which is great because if you do pay attention, the film has some very interesting things to say about modern media coverage and how blameless disasters can be spun into whatever the 24 hour news cycle needs it to be.

In the film, Denzel Washington is assigned Chris Pine ("Star Trek"), a rookie train engineer, to show him around a decommissioned train yard to give him his "track legs" as it were. During a routine exercise, a call goes out over all stations saying that a train carrying dangerous and volatile chemicals is out of control and nobody seems to be able to, or really wants to, do anything about it. Well, Washington isn't having that and drags Pine along for a positively breathtaking thrill ride of a picture.

Tony Scott is working with some fresh blood in the acting department. Chris Pine's light-hearted sarcasm evens out Washington's brooding flawlessly and really elevates an already visually and thematically strong film to the status of a modest action classic. I mean, it won't win any major awards, but the way it keeps playing your own expectations against you is a difficult trick that I hope more filmmakers can master.



Red Bliss Potato Casserole

from Chef Boy-ar-Dave

Average Cost of Meal: \$8 - \$10

Time of Preparation: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serving Size: 4 - 6

Ingredients:

8 - 10 boiled red potatoes
1 lb. Velveeta cheese
2 tablespoons parsley
1-2 teaspoons paprika
1 tiny jar pimento cheese
½ cup chopped onion
3 slices cubed bread
2 sticks of melted butter
garlic salt

Instructions:

Boil the potatoes until cooked. Preheat the oven to 350°. Melt the butter. Chop the onion. Cube the Velveeta. Cube up 3 slices of bread. Quarter the cooked potatoes. In a medium bowl mix together the paprika, garlic salt, pimento cheese, chopped onion, parsley, and Velveeta. Line a pyrex dish with melted butter. Add the rest of the butter to the mixture in the bowl. Line the pyrex dish with the cooked potatoes. Pour the mixture over the potatoes. Take the cubed bread and push some into the dish and lay the rest on top. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes.

UWIRE review: 'Due Date' fails with weak script

By Alex Williams
Daily Texan via UWIRE

Sometimes, a film can have all the right ingredients: A proven, smart director, two immensely likeable stars, and a tried and true premise. And sometimes, even with all those ingredients, a film can rub you the wrong way or just fail. Unfortunately, "Due Date" is a perfect example of this.

Robert Downey Jr. and Zach Galifianakis star as two men forced to drive across the country together after a misunderstanding on a plane lands them on the no-fly list. However, time is short, because Peter's (Robert Downey Jr.) first child is being born in a matter of days. The set-up is bound to draw comparisons to the John Hughes classic "Planes, Trains and Automobiles," but where that film was heartfelt

and warm in its humor, "Due Date" is obnoxious and annoying.

Almost every negative aspect to the film can be tied back to the screenplay, which is frustratingly inconsistent. It's dark, but never enough to be taken seriously, and it never quite reaches the heights it's aiming for in that respect. It's got a handful of funny jokes, but that's because of the sheer, irrepressible likability of its stars.

Unfortunately, this about all the film has going for it. Its characters are empty vehicles, going wherever the lazy, obvious jokes demand they must. They don't behave like real people, even though the film desperately wants us to take them and their arcs seriously.

Downey Jr. manages to come out mostly unscathed thanks to a few great moments, especially a late-night conversation at a rest stop that actually manages to be legitimately

sweet. It feels like a scene out of a smarter, funnier film.

Galifianakis, on the other hand, after his already-iconic role in last year's "The Hangover" (from the same director), is ridiculous here, less a character than a collection of eccentricities and quirks played for laughs. It's as if someone took his character from "The Hangover" and told him to be even weirder, but lose everything that made that character stand out in the first place. The results are almost depressing in their hollowness.

"Due Date" should have been a much funnier film, and on paper, it sounds like a surefire winner. However, an insurmountably weak script undoes the entire thing, despite the best efforts of its stars.