

Bust!: "21," "Run Fatboy Run," "Superhero Movie," and "Stop-Loss"

Written by Mike Schulz

Wednesday, 02 April 2008 02:30

- [Download Sony ACID Pro 6](#)
- [99.95\\$ Red Giant PluralEyes 3 cheap oem](#)
- [Buy Cheap Rosetta Stone - Learn Korean \(Level 1, 2 & 3 Set\)](#)
- [Download Lynda.com - Improving SEO Using Accessibility Techniques](#)
- [Discount - Adobe Illustrator CS4 MAC](#)
- [39.95\\$ Parallels Desktop 8 MAC cheap oem](#)
- [Download Lynda.com - Advanced Modeling in Revit Architecture](#)
- [Download Eyeon Fusion 6 \(32 bit\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Lynda.com - Photoshop for Designers: Textures](#)
- [Download Adobe Photoshop CS4 Studio Techniques](#)
- [259.95\\$ Autodesk AutoCAD Mechanical 2010 \(32 bit\) cheap oem](#)
- [Buy Adobe Photoshop Elements 6 \(en\)](#)



21

Based on the Ben Mezrich nonfiction *Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six MIT Students Who Took Vegas for Millions*, the film *21* boasts a far snappier title, yet I wouldn't recommend viewing it if you're even a day older than that. It's not often that a true story is re-told with such aggressive fraudulence, but *21*

is a rare and rather spectacular failure - one in which your bullshit detectors wail at you early on and don't stop until you're rendered nearly deaf. The movie is directed by Robert Luketic, who also helmed *Legally Blonde*, and it's all just slightly less believable than *Legally Blonde*.

As Mezrich's title neatly summarizes the plot, let me nutshell the particulars. Jim Sturgess - the fantastically gifted *Across the Universe* star, forced here into Americanizing his British accent - plays Ben Campbell, a brilliant young mathematician with a hard-working, widowed mom, a pair of brainiac-geek buddies, and an offer to attend Harvard Medical School. The offer, though,

Bust!: "21," "Run Fatboy Run," "Superhero Movie," and "Stop-Loss"

Written by Mike Schulz

Wednesday, 02 April 2008 02:30

comes with a catch: Poor Ben might actually have to

y

or his education. And so, after some ethical hand-wringing, he joins forces with a group of fellow students who make a considerable fortune by counting cards in blackjack, and who are led - inevitably - by Kevin Spacey as a sardonic, snaky MIT professor. (I still think he's an acting genius and all, but Kevin Spacey's Kevin Spacey routine is getting

really

irritating.)

pa

f

What follows, of course, is your standard, Hollywood-ized coming-of-age tale wherein Ben becomes hooked by the dangerous allure of All That Money (and, with Kate Bosworth, All That Sex), loses touch with his Deeper Values, and eventually gets the loot, the girl, Harvard, and revenge against his sneering nemesis. It's the American Dream!

It's also, unfortunately, a total crock. The movie's narrative predictability wouldn't be particularly annoying if *21* simply displayed some actual intelligence, but reel after reel here is almost pathologically stupid. We're told that the students' Vegas scam works, in part, because of how imperceptible their signals are, yet the actors' physical communiqués are so overt - and have been made so *additionally* overt by Luketic's obvious staging- that they might as well fire off starting pistols. Characters abruptly change motivations from scene to scene; Bosworth's smokin' cipher tells Ben they shouldn't mix business with pleasure, and takes him to bed five minutes after rebuffing him. (Their lovemaking scene is a riot, by the way; it's been ages since I've watched a camera discreetly pan away from a couple's passionate throes and land on the image of a spewing fountain.) The film's ridiculousness even extends to the casting - is it just me, or do

resemble the butt-kicking marionettes in

Team America: World Police

?

21's hot young cheaters eerily

There's exactly one clever moment to be found in the whole of this overwrought, overbearing enterprise. Laurence Fishburne plays the head of a Vegas security outfit, and while monitoring his surveillance cameras, he's seen intently smoking a cigarette. I asked myself if people were still *allowed* to intently smoke cigarettes in Vegas surveillance stations, and I soon had my answer - Fishburne's employer enters and promptly tells him to extinguish it, which the actor grudgingly does while replying, "It's the end of an era." If *21* - which earned that figure times a million (and more) in its opening weekend - is what passes for smart, sexy cinematic entertainment these days, it most certainly is.



RUN FATBOY RUN

Run Fatboy Run, in which a chubby slacker enters a marathon to win back the heart of the pregnant woman he abandoned at the altar (!), was originally intended as a prototypical American slob comedy, and with someone like Adam Sandler or Ben Stiller, it might easily have been unbearable, overloaded as it with maudlin sentiment and *de rigueur* gross-outs - Exploding blisters! Naked middle-aged asses! - and characters even more senseless than those in

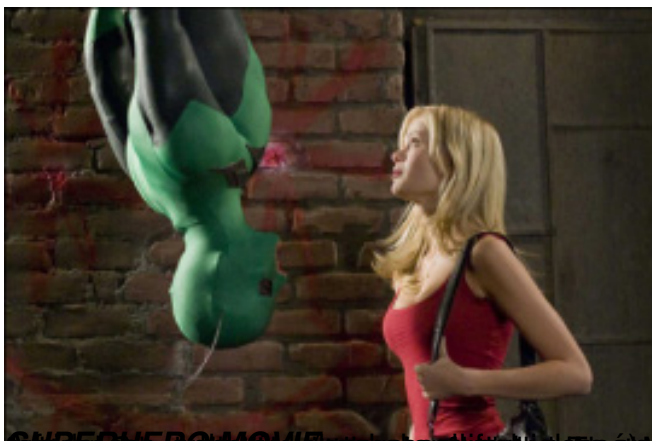
21
. (Our hero's romantic rival goes from persnickety to monstrously hateful in record time.) Thank God, then, for the filmmakers' decision to cast that inspired British clown Simon Pegg in the lead, as his natural eccentricity humanizes even the basest jokes, and his repartee with fellow Brits Thandie Newton and Dylan Moran (plus the ever-excellent Hank Azaria) fools you into thinking the material is wittier than it really is. Led by director David Schwimmer, the actors make this hit-or-miss slapstick work (barely), but

Run Fatboy Run
is still a little depressing, because it finds really smart people expending considerable energies on an almost staggeringly dim-witted project.

Bust!: "21," "Run Fatboy Run," "Superhero Movie," and "Stop-Loss"

Written by Mike Schulz

Wednesday, 02 April 2008 02:30



Superhero Movie has made it to the top of the box office charts, and it's a surprise. The film is a comedy that stars Tim Allen and Robert Downey Jr. It's a fun, lighthearted take on the superhero genre.



Run Fatboy Run is a comedy starring Hugh Grant and Rachel Watson. It's a fun, lighthearted take on the superhero genre. The film is a comedy that stars Hugh Grant and Rachel Watson. It's a fun, lighthearted take on the superhero genre.
