

Written by Mike Schulz  
Sunday, 14 March 2010 14:42

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## **GREEN ZONE**

Set in Baghdad during the early months of 2002, director Paul Greengrass' action thriller *Green Zone*

casts Matt Damon as a stalwart, driven military officer who gradually discovers that the American government lied about the proliferation - even the existence - of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. This might strike you as old news, and it is. The disappointing surprise of *Green Zone*

, though, is that the movie itself should feel like such old news, and in ways that have nothing to do with Greengrass and Damon re-teaming after the considerable artistic and popular successes of their *Bourne Supremacy* and *Bourne Ultimatum* films.

It takes a while for that realization to sink in, mostly because Greengrass is such a no-frills wizard at composition and choreography; the skirmishes, assaults, and chase sequences - shot in hand-held, *vérité* style by *The Hurt Locker* cinematographer Barry Ackroyd - are beautifully executed. Yet despite the film's technical acumen and Damon's expectedly magnetic stoicism, you can't shake the feeling that this fiction inspired by truth is a little too ... well ...

*fictional*

, twisting events of unimaginable complexity into a conveniently simplistic, one-man-bucking-the-system narrative. (The movie ends with the swelling of John Powell's triumphant-hero score, which suggests, " ... and everyone in Iraq lived happily ever after!") Brian Helgeland's flat, prosaic script doesn't help matters, nor do the oddly unfocused supporting turns by Greg Kinnear, Brendan Gleeson, and Amy Ryan (who, as a compromised

*Wall Street Journal*

reporter, appears to be wincing her way through her dialogue). But in all honesty, *Green Zone*

is never more chilling than when recounting President Bush's notorious "mission accomplished" press conference or the announcement of the dismantling of Iraq's army; on any level you can name, those real-life horrors trump Greengrass' and Helgeland's invented, discouragingly rote action-thriller horrors. In the end, the movie is professionally assembled but easy to tune out on,

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and so little of it is freshly imagined that you can find your mind wandering in odd directions throughout. Whatever its filmmakers wanted us to take from the overly familiar experience of *Green Zone*

, I'm doubting it's the thought that Damon and Kinnear were actually preferable co-stars when playing conjoined twins in *Stuck on You*



### **REMEMBER ME**

Your reaction to the romantic drama *Remember Me* will largely, if not completely, depend on your feelings toward its finale, which I've read reviewers and online commentators describe as a grossly exploitative, unprepared-for shock. I won't necessarily argue with that first part, but the climax seemed to me nothing *but* anticipated; I'm sorry, but if (SPOILER ALERT ... I guess ... ) a film opens in Manhattan in 1991, then offers a "10 Years Later" title card, then delivers a melancholic love story while May slowly turns to September ... . Well, by then, should there really be any question as to what life-altering event the plot is leading toward? If you're alert to, and can handle, director Allen Coulter's and screenwriter Will Fetters' inevitable destination, you might find this contrived yet heartfelt love story between damaged souls (

*Twilight*

's Robert Pattinson and

*Lost*

's Emilie de Ravin, both very fine) a solid, emotionally resonant tearjerker that nicks at your insides in unexpected ways. If not, at least you've been warned. Kind of.



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## ***SHE'S OUT OF MY LEAGUE***

Crass, predictable, yet intermittently *really* entertaining, *She's Out of My League* gives away its entire plot in its title, with Jay Baruchel's skinny nebbish spending 90-ish minutes distrustful of the affections of his perfect-10 girlfriend (played by the sunny, friendly Alice Eve, who seems deserving of that numerical ranking). Despite the occasional bodily-fluid and ball-shaving gags, director Jim Field Smith's debut feature is a wispy little throwaway of a movie - the laughs match the groans in pretty much equal measure - and it culminates in one of those race-through-the-airport climaxes that became old hat, oh, about a zillion romantic comedies ago. But there are certainly worse ways to piss away your time than with an ensemble this enjoyable: Beyond the agreeably mismatched leads,

*She's Out of My League*

finds room for terrifically likable, even witty turns by Nate Torrence, Mike Vogel, Lindsay Sloane, Kyle Bornheimer, Krysten Ritter, and that fabulous

*That '70s Show*

mom Debra Jo Rupp, who at one point here steals a scene merely by grinning, giggling, and happily jumping up and down. Which is pretty much my reaction any time Rupp shows up *anywhere*

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## ***OUR FAMILY WEDDING***

The deathly obvious, staggeringly unfunny *Our Family Wedding* concerns an African-American father (Forest Whitaker, way o

ut of his element) and a Hispanic-American father (Carlos Mencia, all too

*in* his element) who are grudgingly forced to accept the mixed-race marriage of the former's son (Lance Gross) and the latter's daughter (America Ferrera). In one scene, for reasons not worth explaining, a goat runs amok in Whitaker's bathroom, downs the man's supply of Viagra, and proceeds to hump his leg to high heaven. Afterward, the animal makes eye contact with Whitaker and bleats, "Call me," and as it walks away ... . Yeah, I think that's all you really need to know.

# Mishmash Accomplished: "Green Zone," "Remember Me," "She's Out of My League," and "Our Family We

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