

The Dog Days of August: "Rush Hour 2," "The Princess Diaries," and "Original Sin"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 07 August 2001 18:00

- [Download Nuance PDF Converter Professional 6](#)
- [9.95\\$ Lightroom 3: Streamlining Your Digital Photography Process cheap oem](#)
- [9.95\\$ Excel VBA Programming For Dummies cheap oem](#)
- [Discount - Atomix VirtualDJ Pro 7 MAC](#)
- [Buy OEM Adobe InCopy CS6 MAC](#)
- [Buy Intuit Quicken 2009 Home & Business \[Canada\] \(en\)](#)
- [Discount - Autodesk AutoCAD Mechanical 2009](#)
- [Discount - Lynda.com - Creating Dynamic Menus](#)
- [Buy Cheap Adobe Premiere Pro CS3](#)
- [Download Autodesk AutoCAD Electrical 2010 \(32 bit\)](#)
- [Buy Cheap Autodesk AutoCAD Design Suite Ultimate 2013 \(32-bit\)](#)
- [Buy OEM Lynda.com - Best Practices for Flash-based Banner Ads](#)
- [Download Adobe Dreamweaver CS3](#)
- [Buy Cheap Autodesk AutoCAD Structural Detailing 2012 \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Download ConeXware PowerArchiver 2009](#)



RUSH HOUR 2

I didn't care for the smash hit *Rush Hour* when it came out in 1998, and so the arrival of *Rush Hour 2*

needless to say, didn't fill me with excitement. But the prospect of seeing the great John Lone and

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

's Zhang Ziyi in supporting roles piqued my interest, and you never know when star Jackie Chan is going to pull off some miraculous stunts, so an open mind seemed appropriate.

It turns out, though, that none of your feelings about Lone, Ziyi, or Chan will affect whether you like *Rush Hour 2*; this sequel

is all about Chris Tucker, and if you enjoy his comic antics, you'll probably enjoy the movie. If you find him one-note and grating, as I do, the terrific Asian talents director Brett Ratner has assembled will merely dull the pain.

Tucker and Chan return as Detectives Carter and Lee, who travel from Hong Kong to Los

The Dog Days of August: "Rush Hour 2," "The Princess Diaries," and "Original Sin"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 07 August 2001 18:00

Angeles to Las Vegas to foil assorted bombers and counterfeiters. As if plotting mattered here. The movie, like its predecessor, is just an excuse for fish-out-of-water comedy while Tucker and Chan kick bad-guy ass and mangle the English language. That would probably be enough for an empty-headed summertime diversion but for two things: the bad-guy ass-kickings aren't very exciting and the English-language manglings aren't very amusing. (Beware the movie whose outtakes over the end credits are funnier than anything in the film.) Jackie Chan has gone on record saying he wasn't given sufficient time to work out the stunts he's famous for, and they do seem particularly uninspired, but certainly they had time to write funnier things for Tucker to say. His performance consists of one long tirade against Asians, against whites – against anyone, in other words, who isn't Chris Tucker. In his very brief role in Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*, Tucker put his manic energy to the service of a character and was a mini-revelation; here, all but his most ardent admirers will just want him to shut the hell up.

There's no denying that John Lone, silky and sinister, and Zhang Ziyi, gorgeous and thrilling to watch, up the entertainment ante, and Alan King, as a hotel proprietor, is always welcome; they make *Rush Hour 2* bearable. But the film itself, which had little novelty value even in its original incarnation, is a drag, a witless and meandering money-grubber.

Tiger

Crouching
was

a crossover smash;

Rush Hour 2

's filmmakers should have realized that, focused on their remarkable Asian stars, and kept motor-mouthed Chris Tucker in the background.



THE PRINCESS DIARIES

Since I'm not a 12-year-old girl, I don't know what the target audience for *The Princess Diaries* will possibly make of the movie, but I'm hoping that at least a few of them find it offensive. A *Pretty Woman*

for the pre-teen set (with that film's director, Garry Marshall, reprising his duties here), *Diaries*

stars Anne Hathaway as a nerdy 15-year-old San Franciscan who discovers that she's actually an honest-to-God princess, and heir to the throne of a European kingdom. Trouble is, she's also a klutzy basketcase, so Queen Grandma (played by Julie Andrews) and Grandma's assistant

The Dog Days of August: "Rush Hour 2," "The Princess Diaries," and "Original Sin"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 07 August 2001 18:00

(played, to no one's surprise, by Hector Elizondo) attempt to royal-ize her and make her fit for society. Goodbye, unformed teen; hello, Julia Roberts.

Anne Hathaway appears to be a bright young actress with a great smile and a fair degree of comedic skill. She is also absolutely no one's idea of a 15-year-old girl. Putting this confident, past-her-teen-years performer in geek drag is akin to seeing Goldie Hawn in the fat suit in *Death Becomes Her*

; you don't buy it for a minute, but here, no comic irony is intended. (It's especially insulting when she's paired with Heather Matarazzo, of

Welcome to the Dollhouse

, as her best friend; Hathaway's presence violates Matarazzo's refreshingly realistic screen presence.) Like

Pretty Woman

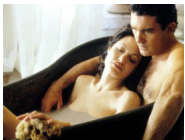
and the far-worse

Miss Congeniality

, the movie pretends to be an Ugly Duckling story but is actually about a swan who turns into an even lovelier swan, and I'm doubting there are many teens and pre-teens who can relate to *that*

. Maybe this major failing wouldn't be so bothersome if the story took a few twists, or if Marshall's direction weren't so leadenly obvious, or if the radiant Julie Andrews were allowed to play something other than Julie Andrews. As it stands, though, the unfunny and slow-moving *The Princess Diaries*

tells its audience: If you think you're a loser, you probably are, so clean up your act. Who says Hollywood has nothing to teach our youth?



ORIGINAL SIN

Is it just me, or does everyone seem positively *exhausted* by Angelina Jolie? Just a few years ago she was giving much-needed vitality to TV movies such as

Gia

and

George Wallace

The Dog Days of August: "Rush Hour 2," "The Princess Diaries," and "Original Sin"

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 07 August 2001 18:00

, and providing smart, incisive performances in such films as

Playing by Heart

and

Pushing Tin

. But ever since she won her (rather undeserved) Oscar for

Girl, Interrupted

, she's become a cartoon of her public persona; nothing but the bee-stung lips and the dangerous demeanor and the "I'm too hot for this world" blitheness. That sort of worked for

Tomb Raider

because she was already

playing

a cartoon, but in

Original Sin

she's playing a flesh-and-blood femme fatale, and she's incredibly phony – all attitude with nothing behind it. Jolie is still young, so the situation isn't hopeless, but she – quickly – needs to find ways to surprise us again. (A few weeks ago, while watching a trailer for

Original Sin

, a shot of those famous lips preceded her actual appearance, and a woman behind me muttered, "Oh God, not her again.")

Having said that, though, I doubt there's much she could have done to redeem *Original Sin*, writer-director Michael Cristofer's beyond-ridiculous 18th Century sex thriller. Jolie plays a mail-order bride to Antonio Banderas' coffee merchant, and the film is one set of treacheries and reversals and violent interludes after another, with the occasional soft-core sex scene thrown in for good measure. It would take a supremely talented filmmaker to make all this posturing and Harlequin Romance-esque bodice-ripping anything more than moronic; politely put, Michael Cristofer is not supremely talented. I have no doubt that the movie will vanish from area screens quickly, making further discussion irrelevant, but it's still worth noting that Banderas can't seem to find a good script to save his life (you might have to reach back to the comedies he made for Pedro Almodovar to recall one), and that Jolie, for the time being, has run out of fresh ideas. It's the deliberate trashing of her talent that's the true

Sin

.