

'The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard' misses the mark

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: <<<

out of <<<<<<

Running Time: 100 minutes

This film was released exclusively at theaters on June 16.

Released in 2017, *The Hitman's Bodyguard* was a throwback to buddy action pictures of old, coasting mostly on the charm and chemistry of its two lead actors. It was also a box office success, which means that these performers have now returned for a new adventure. Oddly enough, this is a sequel that emphasizes outrageous shootouts and action over the central relationship between the protagonists. As a result,

The Hitman's Bodyguard's Wife

wastes its talented cast, who end up getting lost in the chaos.

After the events of the previous film, an anxiety-ridden Michael Bryce (Ryan Reynolds) has lost his bodyguard license. Seeking calmness and tranquility, he decides to take a vacation, only to encounter a manic Sonia Kincaid (Salma Hayek). She tells him that her husband Darius (Samuel L. Jackson) has been kidnapped by mobsters and demands his help to retrieve him.

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Pulled along against his wishes, he and the others become embroiled in an international plot involving terrorist Aristotle Papadopoulos (Antonio Banderas).

It seems that the European Union is about to impose sanctions on Greece and this criminal has decided to use a massive drill to take down the power grid of Europe and cause devastation. The threesome sets out to stop the threat and save the continent.

As you can already tell by reading the synopsis, the plot itself is fairly vague and nonsensical, serving only as an excuse for the characters to travel to some admittedly scenic locations and fire weapons at villainous goons. And while the emphasis on slapstick and sight gags might initially seem like a good idea, the final product overplays the material. The first half is filled with choppy and chaotic action. The usually exemplary actors appear to have been told that they should be spending the entirety of their screen time screaming and shouting at one another in the most exaggerated manner possible.

This even includes the Interpol agent (Frank Grillo) who suddenly takes charge of the mission.

The action is generally well-staged, but montages are frequently used to move the characters through situations as quickly as possible. The end result is all so hectic that it doesn't come across as amusing. In fact, the rapid pace really hurts the film. While Reynolds does manage to sell a quip or two while under duress, many of the verbal jabs between the protagonists end up landing with a thud.

And the jokes themselves aren't all that clever to begin with. Some physical humor in the feature's early sections, includes thugs having their brains blown out, with brain matter splashing onto a horrified Bryce. Perhaps something humorous could have been made with the lead forced to move around in public covered in gore, but none of the extras in later scenes seem to notice or care about his blood-soaked clothes.

Thankfully, after some time the movie does calm down and begin to improve. When Bryce, Darius, and Sonia seek refuge with one of the bodyguard's family members, the ensuing conversation results in amusing banter. Bryce's strained relationship with a parental figure and a backstory between Sonia and Papadopoulos are entertaining subplots that allow for some interesting conflict and conversation between the central characters. It's unfortunate that these

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more interesting elements are introduced so late in the proceedings.

There isn't anyone who wouldn't have appreciated this cast trading sharp-witted barbs while on the run from sinister forces. Alas, the approach to this sequel is so hyperactive and overbaked that the great cast ends up being given little to do except chew scenery. While its predecessor wasn't perfect, it did have a few engaging moments. In the end, *The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard* ends up whiffing on far too many elements and ultimately misses the mark.

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