

## **‘Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One’ delivers the goods**

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun  
Friday, 21 July 2023 04:55

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**Rating:** <<<<

**out of** <<<<<<

**Running Time:** 163 minutes

**This feature from Paramount Pictures opened in cinemas everywhere on Wednesday, July 12.**

When the first *Mission: Impossible* feature opened back in 1996, it made quite a sensation thanks to a surprisingly twisty plot and some dazzling visual panache. Despite its box office success, few would have guessed that the movie would have spawned a massive franchise with six sequels, as well as one more that will arrive next year.

The follow-ups have always been fun movies, although as time has passed the stunts seem to have taken over the storyline. In fact, some of them are best remembered by what Tom Cruise happens to be hanging from during the most elaborate action set piece (a plane, a cliff, the Burj Khalifa). *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One* is the latest chapter. This movie attempts to stand out from the pack by presenting the leads with their biggest threat yet.

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As it turns out, the menace is an artificial intelligence program known as the Entity that has become sentient. It has infiltrated just about every piece of modern technology and can sabotage any digital system anywhere and predict the actions of its enemies. However, some believe the AI might be controlled by finding two separate halves of a special key that unlocks an early version of the program.

Hero Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) is tasked with finding the two key pieces, but quickly realizes that the best course of action may be to stop the AI and prevent anyone from possessing its power. Calling on help from agents Luther Stickell (Ving Rhames), Benji Dunn (Simon Pegg) and Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson), the gang race to complete the task. To do so, they must contend with thief Grace (Hayley Atwell), black-market arms dealer Alanna Mitsopolis (Vanessa Kirby), and a sinister figure from Hunt's past known as Gabriel (Esai Morales) who serves the AI, along with his henchperson Paris (Pom Klementieff).

There's a lot of exposition in the film about the Entity, how dangerous it is and what it can do, as well as political maneuvering between numerous government figures who want to use the AI to ultimately control the world (despite the rogue program appearing sentient and rebellious towards humanity). It's all played very straight, yet some of the intrigue and dealmaking between these officials and criminals does come across at times as silly. Still, this is a popcorn summer action film and the Entity does make for both an unusual and dangerous foe.

Additionally, there's so much action and globe-trotting that one doesn't have the opportunity to think about the details for too long. Scene after scene unfolds with Hunt in pursuit of the key and enemies hot on his trail, all as the Entity itself attempts to spoil the plans of anyone seeking to stop it. It's rapidly paced and there are big stakes during most confrontations. Multiple figures and parties are involved in every action scene, adding plenty of zip and excitement to the proceedings.

There's an impressive sequence early on involving Hunt attempting to locate the key at the Abu Dhabi International Airport. Most action films would only include a couple of major characters. Here, the sequence not only details the lead crossing paths with the villainous Gabriel, but also dealing with pickpocket Grace, government officials, as well as an atomic bomb set by the Entity that could detonate at any moment. Despite all of the complications, everything is clearly presented and the involvement of various threats result in an elaborate and dynamic sequence.

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That continues for much of the film, with another great chase in Rome that includes some welcome touches of humor, all the way to the finale (which, yes, does involve characters hanging for dear life off of yet another mode of transportation). The movie also tries to interject a few moments of reflection, as many of the heroes understand the seriousness of the situation and may have to give up their lives for the cause.

There may be some sleight of hand to cover up some of the plot's more convoluted and outrageous elements, but it never hampers the sense of adventure or exhilaration. Everyone involved is clearly giving it their best and the action sequences are more impressively executed than anything that has appeared on the big screen this season. As summer blockbusters go, *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One* delivers the goods.

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