

by Kimberly_Gadette

Movie Review of "DÃ%A€ VU"

As one of today's reigning kings of entertainment, it's not surprising that Jerry Bruckheimer promises his public an eye-filling, mind-blowing extravaganza. We've come to expect it from him (maybe we even demand it of him). Between his television empire (all three "CSI's," "Cold Case," "Without a Trace") plus almost every testosterone-driven action film since 1980 ("Days of Thunder," "Top Gun," "Con Air," "Crimson Tide," "Armageddon," "Pearl Harbor," "The Pirates of the Caribbean" series, the "Beverly Hills Cop" series, and I'm only naming a few), a Jerry Bruckheimer production always promises high-concept, high blood pressure fun. BUT: the trailer and ads go gaga, hinting at apocalyptic events, supernatural forces and mysteries that might stun us into slack-jawed wonder. Don't believe them. Instead, go to "DÃ%A€ Vu" for a crime-based, action-filled drama starring the always-magnificent Denzel, a gorgeous girl and a Timothy McVeigh-esque nutball -- because that's exactly what you're going to get.

An ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms) agent, Denzel Washington's Doug Carlin is called in to analyze the aftermath of a bomb that has exploded on a ferry in the New Orleans harbor, resulting in 543 casualties. The FBI enlist Carlin's help to find the villain, using his expertise in conjunction with a secret toy that enables them to look back at events from four days' prior.

If Bruckheimer, director Tony Scott and the screenwriting team had concentrated more on the plot, closing up gaping holes of improbability, this could have been a better film. Other headscratchers include the concept of inappropriate government surveillance that isn't even touched upon, yet it's a major factor in the picture. And is our hero the only lawman in all of New Orleans? Not only does he work the initial crime scene solo, but he also supervises the ME, dangles from the underside of a bridge, unearths bodies by himself and conducts psychological interviews of prisoners without so much as a tape recorder present. New Orleans may not be as populated as New York or Chicago, but come on!

As for the pace, for a director whose name is synonymous with action, Scott doesn't get the momentum going until halfway through the film. It is unnerving that during key scenes, where every tick of the clock is a countdown to impending disaster, Scott first introduces coy, getting-to-know-you moments between the lovebirds. Rather than add to the suspense, it simply annoys.

Denzel Washington gives a tough, yet quietly sentimental performance as a jaded law enforcement professional who doesn't believe in affairs of the heart. His hard edges, his frustration with the FBI, and his rage at all the bad guys he can't contain is well conveyed. And his gradual falling in love with a ghost is beautifully affecting.

As for the object of his affection, Paula Patton ("Idlewild," "Hitch") lights up the screen with her beauty and intelligence. Supporting performers are fine, especially Val Kilmer, James Caviezel as the aforementioned nutball, and Adam Goldberg (reintroducing the Al-Pacino-in-"Serpico" look), who injects his scenes with

much-needed humor.

Tony Scott simply can't shoot a movie that isn't cinematically stunning. And a scene depicting both night and day at the same time during a high-speed chase is amazing.

Scott's insistence on using New Orleans was a wonderful gesture (his was the first post-Katrina film to shoot in that location), as well as the film's inspiring dedication "to the strength and enduring spirit of the people of New Orleans."

If only the film had as much inspiration â€¦

Grading this movie on the curve of the Deschutes River: B

Kimberly Gadette can be reached at gadettek@yahoo.com

Production Credits: DÃ‰%JÃ‰ VU Directed by: Tony Scott Written by: Bill Marsilii & Terry Rossio
Cast: Denzel Washington, Paula Patton, Val Kilmer, James Caviezel, Adam Goldberg Rated: PG-13
Running Time: 128 minutes Grade: B

The Screen Savor: â€ˆTime Exposureâ€™™ by Kimberly_Gadette