

Film Review: Jason Statham in Highly Charged, Metaphoric ‘Safe’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 27, 2012 - 8:21pm

- [Catherine Chan](#) [2]
- [Chris Sarandon](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [James Hong](#) [5]
- [Jason Statham](#) [6]
- [Lionsgate](#) [7]
- [Movie Review](#) [8]
- [New York City](#) [9]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [10]
- [Robert John Burke](#) [11]
- [Russians](#) [12]
- [Safe](#) [13]
- [The Triads](#) [14]

CHICAGO – There is an underlying smokiness to the ultra-violent “Safe” that is worth exploring. By creating a triangle of doom between the Chinese mob (the Triads), the Russian mob and the corrupt New York City Police Department, it’s just a small leap to apply the same function between the countries they represent. Action star Jason Statham puts it all together.



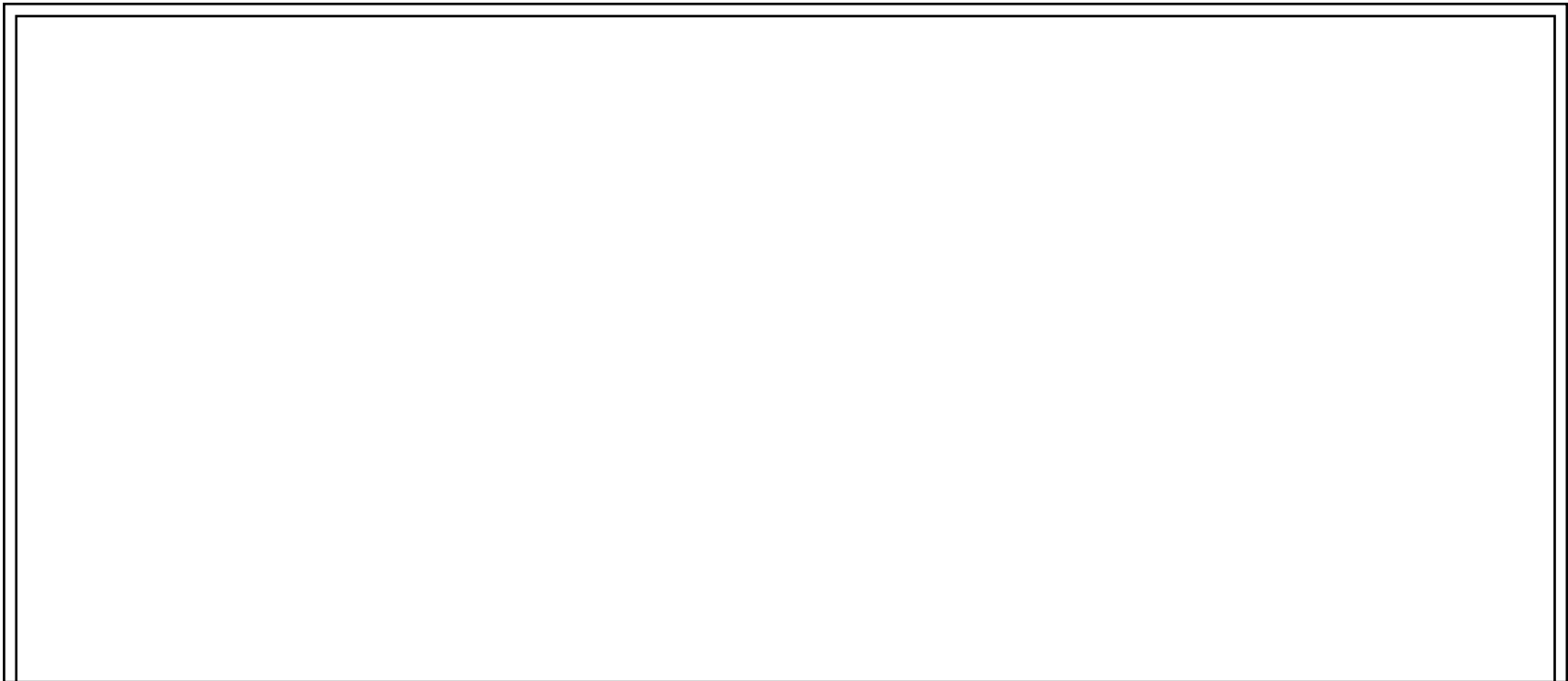
There is a high body count and a lot of gunplay in this unusual thriller, which definitely has a post 9/11 vibe. The criminal mobs are reflected in the police “special units” within the department, and all three cooperate with each other to mostly work against each other. If that isn’t diplomacy in the age of terrorism, then it is back to metaphor class. It is also interesting to note that the outsider, portrayed by Jason Statham, becomes protective of a Chinese girl, which was a trend in adoptions here in these United States for a number of years. There is outrageous action, stunt work and bang-bang, but the film especially works exploring the background of its politics.

Statham is Luke, who is seen cage boxing in New Jersey as the film begins. His counterpart in China, an 11-year-old girl named Mei (Catherine Chan), is shown displaying genius level prowess at memorizing and solving complex math problems. Mei is kidnapped by the Triad, the Chinese mob in New York City, run by the ruthless Han Jiao (James Hong). Han recruits Mei as his personal human computer, keeping figures in her head for all his Chinatown businesses.

Meanwhile, Luke is in trouble with the Russian mob and the police unit he used to work for, because he won a fight he was suppose to throw. His backstory comes to light, as he was the elite cop who spoke out against the corrupt unit. The Russians also know of a series of numbers that Mei has memorized for Han, which are random and out-of-sequence. The Russians kidnap the girl, but she manages to escape from them, and hooks up with Luke during a subway chase and fight. The two new allies must fend off three entities that are after them; the Triad, the Russians. and a NYC police force – teamed with the Mayor’s office – that normally would be protecting them.

“Safe” opens everywhere on April 27th. Featuring Jason Statham, Catherine Chan, James Hong, Chris Sarandon and Robert John Burke. Written and directed by Boaz Yakin. Rated “R”

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Catherine Chan (Mei), Protected by Jason Statham (Luke) in ‘Safe’
Photo credit: John Baer for Lionsgate



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- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/russians>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/safe>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/the-triads>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/18337/jason-statham-in-highly-charged-metaphoric-safe>