

Film Review: 'After Earth' Proves M. Night Shyamalan's Checkmate With Mismatched Smith Family

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on June 1, 2013 - 2:06pm

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CHICAGO – Oscar accolades are a godsend, but so are they an affliction. They're the ultimate vote of respect from your industry, but then you've got to keep being as genius as they thought you were. In M. Night Shyamalan's case, it's all gone downhill since his 1999 smash-hit "The Sixth Sense," which was nominated for six of these portly golden statues. Now attaching his name to a movie does it more destruction than good.



Rating: **1.5/5.0**

After first trying to emulate Alfred Hitchcock and failing to, Shyamalan shifted to attempting a blockbuster with 2010's "The Last Airbender," which won at the box office but failed with critics. Back for redemption in 2013, he teamed up with the most mismatched kin you could imagine: the profitable Hollywood family comprised of Will, Jaden, Jada Pinkett and Caleeb Pinkett Smith.

The result of Shyamalan trying to evidence he could rise to J.J. Abrams or Steven Spielberg blockbuster caliber is that he can't and likely never will. "After Earth" is a wasteland riddled with cinematic trash the likes of which would take thousands of words to successfully dissect. But I'll humor you nonetheless – while our critic, Brian Tallerico, already has in [his 1-out-5 trashing](#) [14].



[Read Adam Fendelman's full review of "After Earth".](#) [15]

From the 12 titles he's written and mostly all directed (excluding "After Earth" because it just opened), I calculate that Shyamalan films have a cumulative global box-office gross of **\$2.5 billion** on total production budgets of **\$665 million** (according to Box Office Mojo data from 2010's "Devil" back to 1992's "Praying With Anger").

Only one Shyamalan film had a global gross less than its production budget (1998's mega flop "Wide Awake"), and by the numbers, he's a financial success over and over again. *But numbers lie.* In the hearts and minds of moviegoers and critics, he's a failure time and time again who keeps trying to prove he's a legend that he's not. Out of 12, only two – "The Sixth Sense" (his biggest big-office hit, at \$672 million, and most profitable film) and 2002's "Signs" (his second biggest, at \$408 million) – should have made it to Hollywood.

"After Earth" stars Will Smith, Jaden Smith, Sophie Okonedo, Zoë Kravitz, Glenn Morshower and David Denman. Its screenplay is by Gary Whitta and M. Night Shyamalan, story by Will Smith and directed by M. Night Shyamalan. The film has a running time of 100 minutes and was released on May 31, 2013. "After Earth" is rated "PG-13" for sci-fi action/violence and some disturbing images.



[Continue for Adam Fendelman's full "After Earth" review.](#) [15]



Jaden Smith in “After Earth”.
Image credit: Columbia Pictures

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