

## Film Review: 'A Million Ways to Die in the West' Suffers Because Seth MacFarlane Casts Himself

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on May 31, 2014 - 12:33pm

- [A Million Ways to Die in the West](#) [2]
- [Adam Fendelman](#) [3]
- [Alec Sulkin](#) [4]
- [Amanda Seyfried](#) [5]
- [Charlize Theron](#) [6]
- [Giovanni Ribisi](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Liam Neeson](#) [9]
- [Movie Review](#) [10]
- [Neil Patrick Harris](#) [11]
- [Sarah Silverman](#) [12]
- [Seth MacFarlane](#) [13]
- [Ted](#) [14]
- [Universal Pictures](#) [15]
- [Wes Studi](#) [16]

CHICAGO – A feature-length comedy is a daunting undertaking. But being *consistently* funny for 2 straight hours is like climbing Mount Everest blindfolded with no arms while taking selfies using your feet.

Special effects mean nothing in the land of comedy. It's all about the writing and the acting (in that order). To give you a sense of who you're working with here, I find "Anchorman" hilarious and "Burn After Reading" for a dark comedy. Seth MacFarlane's "Ted" hits more than it misses, but his return accomplishes the reverse with "A Million Ways to Die in the West" without a reason for being.



Rating: **2.0/5.0**

Double entendres like "That's horseshit!" (referring to intentionally placed manure in the middle of a statement of disdain) fall flat while a game at the fair called "Runaway Slave" is genuinely funny (and finds a way for a recently *unchained* man to appear for a perfect post-credits cameo). Likewise, it works when MacFarlane gives yet another ode to Mila Kunis (who appears in "Ted" and voices Meg in his "Family Guy"). When speaking Apache, MacFarlane's character says "Mi La Ku Nis, Mi La Ku Nis" and the subtitles say "fine, fine".

Cameos in general are well used and patiently placed in this film, but the biggest problem with it is Seth MacFarlane's inability to see that he shouldn't have been the star. He holds the film's lead actor, Albert, back. While he valiantly attempts the self-deprecating role of a sheep farmer, he'd have been better solely as the writer, director and a supporting actor rather than the guy with the most screen time.

His love interest, Amanda Seyfried as Louise, is painfully cast as the worst choice in this film. She's never appreciated on camera, barely has anything to say and is wasted whenever the camera pans to her or a mic picks up whatever comes out of her mouth. Her character is terribly predictable: pretty girl is with the good guy, switches to arrogant jerk and then wants the good guy back after he's become our hero.



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Surprisingly, even Neil Patrick Harris is both hit *and* miss. Playing his usual overdramatic and theatrical role, we love him in his moustache song but he's annoying most of the rest of the time (intentionally so, but not lovably so). Liam Neeson is the man you're supposed to love to hate (Clinch Leatherwood instead of Clint Eastwood). He's fine, but certainly not in his "Taken" glory.

Giovanni Ribisi as Edward and Sarah Silverman as Ruth, on the other hand, are an absolute pleasure. While it's no surprise that Ruth is the town's whore and she shacks up with 10 men (on a slow day), she never sleeps with her Christian boyfriend because they're saving themselves for marriage. Their innocence as a couple plays perfect irony against her vulgarity as a prostitute.

*"A Million Ways to Die in the West" stars Seth MacFarlane, Charlize Theron, Liam Neeson, Amanda Seyfried, Neil Patrick Harris, Giovanni Ribisi and Sarah Silverman with moments of Christopher Lloyd, Gilbert Gottfried and Ewan McGregor from writer and director Seth MacFarlane and writers Alec Sulkin and Wellesley Wild. The film, which opened on May 30, 2014, has a running time of 116 minutes. It is rated "R" for strong crude and sexual content, language throughout, some violence and drug material.*



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Seth MacFarlane directs, produces, co-writes and stars in “A Million Ways to Die in the West”.

*Photo credit: Lorey Sebastian, Universal Pictures*



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- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/a-million-ways-to-die-in-the-west>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/adam-fendelman>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/alec-sulkin>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/amanda-seyfried>
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- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/neil-patrick-harris>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/sarah-silverman>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/seth-macfarlane>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/ted>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/universal-pictures>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/wes-studi>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/24070/a-million-ways-to-die-in-the-west-suffers-because-seth-macfarlane-casts-himself>