

## Film Feature: The 10 Worst Films of 2014, By Spike Walters

Submitted by PatrickMcD [1] on December 27, 2014 - 11:57am

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CHICAGO – As HollywoodChicago.com's resident connoisseur of crappy movies, my cup runneth over with choices for my annual worst of the year list. Looking back on the year it seems like I spent many of my nights in a darkened theater aghast at the unspeakable cinematic atrocities.

But these ten films deserve one more shot of scorn for stealing precious hours of my lifetime and providing little or nothing in return. So without further ado, let's get started.





## Wild Photo credit: Fox Searchlight Pictures



There were worse movies this year, but "Wild" makes this list for being the most undeserving potential awards contender. It's an exercise in tedium masquerading as a travelogue of self discovery, as Reese Witherspoon embarks on a thousand mile hike from the Mexican border to Canada. Witherspoon subjects herself to the elements, but has as hard a time getting inside her character as she does trying to set up a tent. She's fundamentally selfish, and unsympathetic, but what's worse is the movie asks us to celebrate her for being selfish and unsympathetic – as though being self-involved were a virtue. It's the Sierra Club version of the intolerable navel gazing of "Eat, Pray, Love," and one trip that should be avoided at all costs.

Click here [22] for the full review of "Wild."





The Amazing Spider-Man 2 Photo credit: Columbia Pictures

"The Amazing Spider Man 2" is the second installment of what has truly become the J.V. squad of superhero film franchises. I think after two turns as the webslinger, the clock has officially run out on Andrew Garfield's time in the Spidey suit. He and director Marc Webb just don't have the stuff to pull off what we've come to expect from our men in tights. Emma Stone remains the one bright spot, but she can't save this overlong bloated would-be extravaganza. With too many villains in one movie, including a dull, lifeless Jamie Foxx as Electro, and the reemergence of The Green Goblin, Spidey never gets a chance to find his swing.



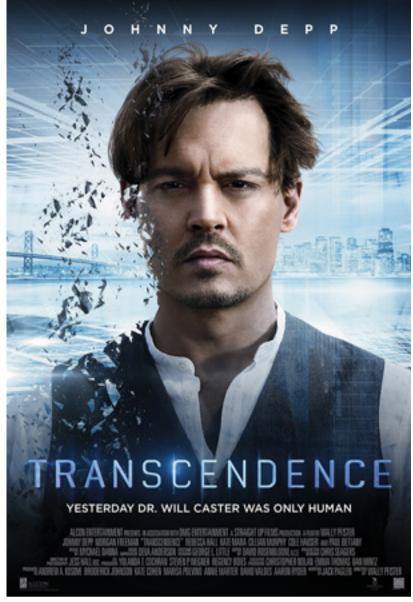


The Guest *Photo credit: Picturehouse* 

This is a one trick pony that audiences wisely stayed away from in theaters. Dan Stevens of "Downton Abbey" plays a mysterious stranger who shows up at the home of one of the dumbest families in the history of dumb suspense thrillers. He's an old army buddy of their son who was killed in action, and he slowly works his way into their lives- while anyone with a pulse in the theater knows he's up to no good. As ominous music swells he seems poised for menace – only to flash a smile and erase any doubt in the minds of the family members – despite mounting evidence to the contrary. It finally devolves into yet another standard issue shootout which is only notable for how incompetently it is executed. This is one "Guest" you should never let inside the front door.







Transcendence Photo credit: Warner Bros

Longtime Christopher Nolan collaborator Wally Pfister climbed into the directors chair for this ludicrous paranoid techno-thriller, but he apparently learned all the wrong lessons from his mentor. He acquired Nolan's affinity for hippy dippy technobabble, but leaves both the striking images and the strong characters behind, in this tale of a groundbreaking scientist (Johnny Depp) working on the next level of artificial intelligence. After Depp's character is mortally wounded by anti-computer hacker assassins, he has his own brain uploaded onto the internet where he becomes a power hungry madman. The film thinks it's trying to say something about the dangers of the internet, but the idiot plot and ponderous self-important tone snuff out any originality. Depp spends most of the movie as a screensaver – a sort of neutered evil Max Headroom without any of the wit or vitality. "Transcendence" is regressive is almost every way.









2014 was a bad year for big studio comedies. This strangely prudish sex comedy is all the more disappointing since it comes from the usually reliable Jason Segel. It's worse than a comedy without laughs, it's a comedy that doesn't seem to know what's funny about its central premise – involving a married couple who try to spice up their marriage with a sex tape and then panic when it leaks onto the internet. There are a million ways to go with this, but "Sex Tape" has neither the insight nor the nerve for satire or sex – so it resorts to broad, increasingly pained slapstick in the hopes that something (anything) will elicit even a mild chuckle. But despite the talented cast, even a smile proves to be beyond this inept studio effort's grasp. This "Sex Tape" should have been erased.

Click here [23] for the full review of "Sex Tape."







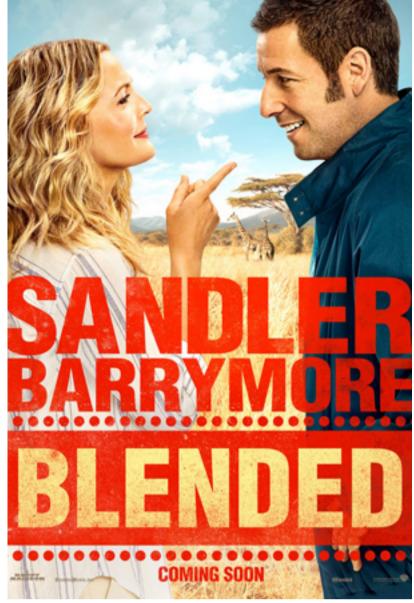
Before I Go to Sleep Photo credit: Clarius Entertainment

This poorly paced potboiler is packed to the brim with unpleasantness. It's a lobotomized amnesiac thriller that plays out like a third-rate rip off of "Memento." Facial invalid Nicole Kidman plays a woman with short term memory loss after an accident. She knows who she is, but forgets everything after the accident after 24 hours. Her long suffering husband (Colin Firth) must remind her with post it notes, pictures, and other evidence – as Kidman tries in vain to show some kind of emotion beyond a strained pout. A movie with two former Oscar winners has no right to be this bad, or this dumb. "Before I Go To Sleep" is utterly forgettable.

Click here [24] for the full review of "Before I Go to Sleep."







Blended Photo credit: Warner Bros

Adam Sandler has reached the state of his career when even lesser entries such as "50 First Dates" begin to look a lot better, compared to whatever piece of excrement he's peddling to audiences this week. "Blended" re-teams Sandler with Drew Barrymore, and while the chemistry is still there, it's served with a healthy dose of racism, bad computer graphics, pained slapstick, and just plain slovenly performances. Sandler and company take a safari to Africa and somehow seduced Sony Pictures into paying for it. This laugh-free catastrophe is not even memorably bad...it's just plain bad.

Click here [25] for the full review of "Blended."

☆3. "The Expendables 3"





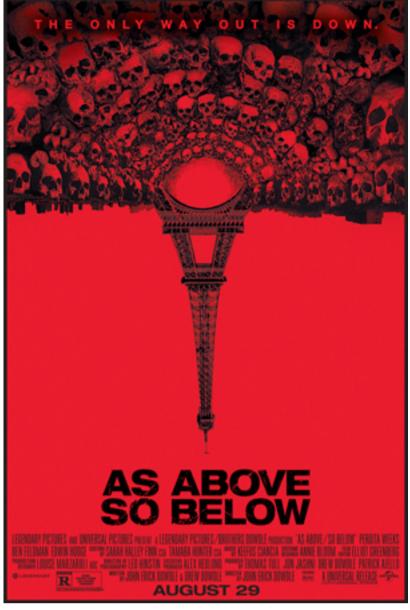
The Expendables 3 *Photo credit: Lionsgate* 

The old man as action hero genre has officially hit rock bottom with this third entry in Sly Stallone's creaky action series. What sets "The Expendables 3" apart is how incompetent it is – despite a cast list that reads like an all-star list of 80's action stars. Say what you want about Stallone, but as a director he at least knows how to put together a decent action set-piece. In contrast, director Patrick Hughes never met a green screen he didn't like, and slices and dices up the action like a third-rate Michael Bay. By no, everyone's too old for this shit. This third entry is truly expendable.

Click here [26] for the full review of "The Expendables 3."



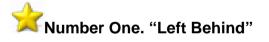




As Above, So Below Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Two things I have come to loathe at the movies are found footage films, and "Paranormal Activity"-style non-thrillers that threaten to bore their audiences to death, with jump scares amid an ocean of banality. "As Above, So Below" combines them into an excruciating combination. It's a story of the world's dumbest scientists teaming up with underground artists to explore the ancient catacombs beneath Paris. Like the explorers, this movie never should have seen the light of day.

Click here [27] for the full review of "As Above, So Below."







Left Behind Photo credit: eOne Entertainment

While "Left Behind" is admittedly more of a hoot than "As Above, So Below," it's undoubtedly a more incompetent movie from beginning to end. From the wooden acting, cheap-looking sets, indifferently-staged action, and hands down the worst-looking plane crash on film in history, this supposedly big budget adaptation of the best selling Christian book series winds up being worse than the Kirk Cameron original version. A couple of howling Nicolas Cage moments aside, the film doesn't even have the courage to embrace the Oscar-winner's scenery chewing abilities. Why cast Cage in an apocalyptic Christian disaster movie at all, if you're not going to let him go wild? The movie reportedly cost 20 million dollars to make, precious little of which ended up on screen.

Click here [28] for the full review of "Left Behind."

To directly access the film reviews of Spike Walters, Contributor for HollywoodChicago.com, <u>click here.</u> [13] For "The 10 Best Films of 2014, by Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, <u>click here.</u> [29]



By <u>SPIKE WALTERS</u> [31] Contributor HollywoodChicago.com <u>spike@hollywoodchicago.com</u> [30]

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[30] mailto:spike@hollywoodchicago.com

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