

Film Review: 'Free Fire' Knows That Happiness is a Warm Gun

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 26, 2017 - 2:29pm

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CHICAGO – In a film that had a sassy, arbitrary perspective on its own flipped-out story, “Free Fire” sought to out-Quentin Tarantino in freaky funny characters and ammo-splurging gun battles. Director Ben Wheatley (“High-Rise”) took an ensemble cast to rarified heights of insult comedy, revenge dynamics and bullets that hit the bone.



Rating: **4.5/5.0**

It's basically an arms sale that goes bad, and it's set in 1978. The rogue cast of characters include stand-outs Sharito Copley (the South African actor from “District 9”), Armie Hammer and Brie Larson. The film is shot in straightforward real time, and the gun battle that takes place after the deal falls apart was a relentless point-of-view survival story that devolved into an unrelenting necessity for humans to wreak havoc on each other. Under director Wheatley, there is a bit of winking at the camera, symbolic statements on the futility of battle, and film class comparisons to genres/themes that will have geeks and grad students analyzing it for years. But it's not overstuffed in the least, it's damned entertaining, and works almost poetically on a number of different levels.

In the disco days of 1978, two gangs are about to meet in an abandoned Boston warehouse. One gang represents gun-runners to the Irish Republican Army, the other gun sellers. The buy will take place simply, with the facilitator Justine (Brie Larson) making sure that head representatives Ord (Armie Hammer) and Chris (Cillian Murphy) make the purchase (briefcase of cash) from a group of arms dealers represented by Vernon (Sharito Copley).

What is unknown to both gangs is that Stevo (Sam Riley), a hot-headed member of the buyer crew, had met seller rep Harry (Jack Reynor) the previous night, and had abused Harry's cousin to the point of hospitalizing her. When they see each other, an escalation occurs, followed by the first shots fired. Soon it becomes a gun battle between the two factions, and it comes down to who survives and, of course, the money.

“Free Fire” opened nationwide on April 21st. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Sharito Copley, Brie Larson, Armie Hammer, Sam Riley, Michael Smiley, Cillian Murphy, Jack Reynor, Noah Taylor, Babou Ceesay and Patrick Bergin. Written by Ben Wheatley and Amy Jump. Directed by Ben Wheatley. Rated “R”



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Armie Hammer, Brie Larson and Cillian Murphy in 'Free Fire'

Photo credit: A24

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