# Clint Eastwood Idles With Caricature Over Character in 'Gran Torino'

Submitted by BrianTT [1] on December 19, 2008 - 10:54am

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CHICAGO – With his second film in just a few months, Clint Eastwood makes one of his biggest missteps of his illustrious career as one of the more esteemed American directors in the history of the medium. Eastwood has made some undeniable masterpieces - "Mystic River", "Million Dollar Baby", "Unforgiven" - but he has been far from perfect, misfiring wildly with films like "Space Cowboys", "The Rookie", and "Pink Cadillac". "Gran Torino" falls much closer to the latter category on Clint's spectrum than the former.

Rating: **2.0**/5.0

Eastwood stars in "Gran Torino" as Walt Kowalski, a bitter, cranky, snarling old man, who is mean to his priest, vicious to his family, and racist to everyone in his increasingly ethnic neighborhood. Walt could be Clint's iconic 'Dirty Harry' character a few years down the road from when we last saw him and a bit more racist. (In fact, there were rumors at one point that "Gran Torino" would be "Dirty Harry 6". If only.)

Read Brian Tallerico's full review of "Gran Torino" in our reviews section. [18]

Walt is a Korean War vet who seems to have entered a contest for the most ignorant, racist comments in the span of the running time of a movie. Can the Hmong family next door melt the ice around this grumpy old man's heart? Can the vet with backbone to spare give some to the weak kid who lives next door? Why should we care again?

In the opening scenes, Walt's wife has passed away and he's growing increasingly distant from the rest of his family. The predictable and skin-deep plot doesn't really get underway until the kindly Hmong teenager next door named Thao (Bee Vang) tries and fails to steal the only thing he loves - his 1972 Gran Torino. Walt just wants to be left alone by a world he hates more every day, but he's sucked into a horrible written gang war when he saves Thao from an altercation on his neighbor's front lawn because the poor kid couldn't steal the car he was ordered to snag. Let's hope "Get off my lawn" doesn't take off like "Make my day."

*'Gran Torino' stars Clint Eastwood, Christopher Carley, Bee Vang, Ahney Her, Geraldine Hughes, Brian Haley, and John Carroll Lynch. 'Gran Torino,' which was written by Nick Schenk and directed by Clint Eastwood, opened in Chicago on December 19, 2008.*

Continuing reading for Brian Tallerico's full "Gran Torino" review. [18]

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