

Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg Partner in Cop Farce 'The Other Guys'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 6, 2010 - 6:29am

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – While a cop film take-off is filed under the fish-in-a-barrel category, writer/director Adam McKay manages to spin some absurd gold threads into the thin blue cloth. In other words, Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg are damn funny in this all-in cop farce, with enough familiar co-star support to prop up the whole enchilada.

The film opens with the most heroic detectives in New York City, P.K. Highsmith (Samuel L. Jackson) and Christopher Danson (Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson) chasing down another suspect. The chase is their usual over-the-top do or die street race, ending up with a leap into a tour bus, which they end up commandeering. The bust puts them again on the front page, with more honors from grateful Manhattanites.

Back at the station, Highsmith and Danson accept the accolades from their colleagues, including the "other guys," partners Terry Hoitz (Mark Wahlberg) and Allen Gamble (Will Ferrell), detectives who are assigned to their desks. This particularly galls Hoitz, a man of action, forced to desk duty because of a weapons incident at a World Series game. Gamble is content to ride out his assignment, because he doesn't rock the boat.



Making the Collar: Will Ferrell as Gamble, Steve Coogan as Erston and Mark Wahlberg as Hoitz in 'The Other Guys'
Photo Credit: Macall Polay for © 2010 Columbia TriStar Marketing Group

Opportunity knocks for the other guys when Highsmith and Danson go on one chase too many, and die in action. Hoitz and Gamble beg their superior, Captain Gene Mauch (Michael Keaton) to follow up on a suspected kidnapping involving financier David Erston (Steve Coogan), which leads them into a rabbit hole of investment corruption and slow motion shoot outs. This barely gives time for the straitlaced Gamble to spend time with his wife (Eva Mendes) or for Hoitz to keep stalking his old girlfriend (Lindsay Sloane).

This is a laugh riot of individual bits rather than a lucid plot or rational action. Time outs are taken in the narrative for flights of comedic fancy, including Gamble's past as a reluctant pimp, his penchant for attracting beautiful ladies (Mendes is stunning) and his public humiliation in being forced to carry a wooden gun, which after taken by the bad guys is returned with a nice varnish.

Mark Wahlberg plays the straight man, matching to droll perfection his "say hello to your mother" cop in "The Departed." His best moments come in simple reaction, as his exasperation over his freaky partner, or his characteristic of taking bribes and then realizing he's doing it while enjoying front row seats at "Jersey Boys." He has fun with the role, especially within the typical cop role of tough-guy-ready-for-action. All the mastery of his peculiar skills – such as ballet dancing and harp playing – come from a desire to know them so he could best make fun and beat up kids who did them in his old neighborhood.

The supporting cast has some entertaining moments. It is fun to see Michael Keaton in the type of role that first got him noticed – that of a flustered but smarmy guy who always has a funny line. There is Bobby Cannavale, who steals a scene as Jimmy, a cop in group therapy who is satisfied with the discharge of his weapon. Even Eva Mendes gets into the act, breaking out in a comic rant in the middle of her perfect wife role. It was if director/writer McKay understood what each supporting player could bring to the table, and milked them for maximum side-splitting.

There is even a bit of social satire in the midst of all the comic chaos. Steve Coogan is deadpan as the financier, whose smallest bit of advice send investors running towards him in a rock star riot, but in reality is leveraged like a small time hood. The working man's willingness to look the other way when it comes to financial matters is best characterized by Coogan's elaborate bribes, using sports and musical theater as a distraction. And internationalism in money matters are emphasized when overseas financial representatives figure in the final chase, using skills like motorcycle stunt driving.



Domestic Bliss: Will Ferrell and Eva Mendes as Sheila in 'The Other Guys'
Photo Credit: Macall Polay for © 2010 Columbia TriStar Marketing Group

To paraphrase a famous quote about music, writing about this type of comedy is like dancing about architecture. Many sequences, like a night of drinking that Hoitz and Gamble enjoy (indescribably strange and hilarious) or Gamble's need to break out into bizarre Irish ballads, are meant to be seen, not analyzed. And even despite the habit of McKay/Ferrell films to run bits into the ground, this film is very funny.

The film's whole comic philosophy can be summed up in Samuel L. Jackson and The Rock meeting their demise in the beginning of the film. If there is a willingness to leap, there is bound to be something funny at the other end.

"The Other Guys" opens everywhere August 6th. Featuring Will Ferrell, Mark Wahlberg, Michael Keaton, Samuel L. Jackson, Eva Mendes, Dwayne Johnson, Steve Coogan, Rob Riggle, Damon Wayans and Lindsay Sloane. Screenplay by Adam McKay and Chris Henchy, directed by Adam McKay. Rated "PG-13"

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [18]
Senior Staff Writer



[17]

HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [17]

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