

Something’s Gotta Give With T.I., Matt Dillon in ‘Takers’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 27, 2010 - 7:38am

- [Chris Brown](#) [2]
- [Hayden Christensen](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [Idris Elba](#) [5]
- [Jay Hernandez](#) [6]
- [John Luessenhop](#) [7]
- [Marianne Jean-Baptiste](#) [8]
- [Matt Dillon](#) [9]
- [Michael Ealy](#) [10]
- [Movie Review](#) [11]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [12]
- [T.I.](#) [13]
- [Takers](#) [14]
- [Zoe Saldana](#) [15]



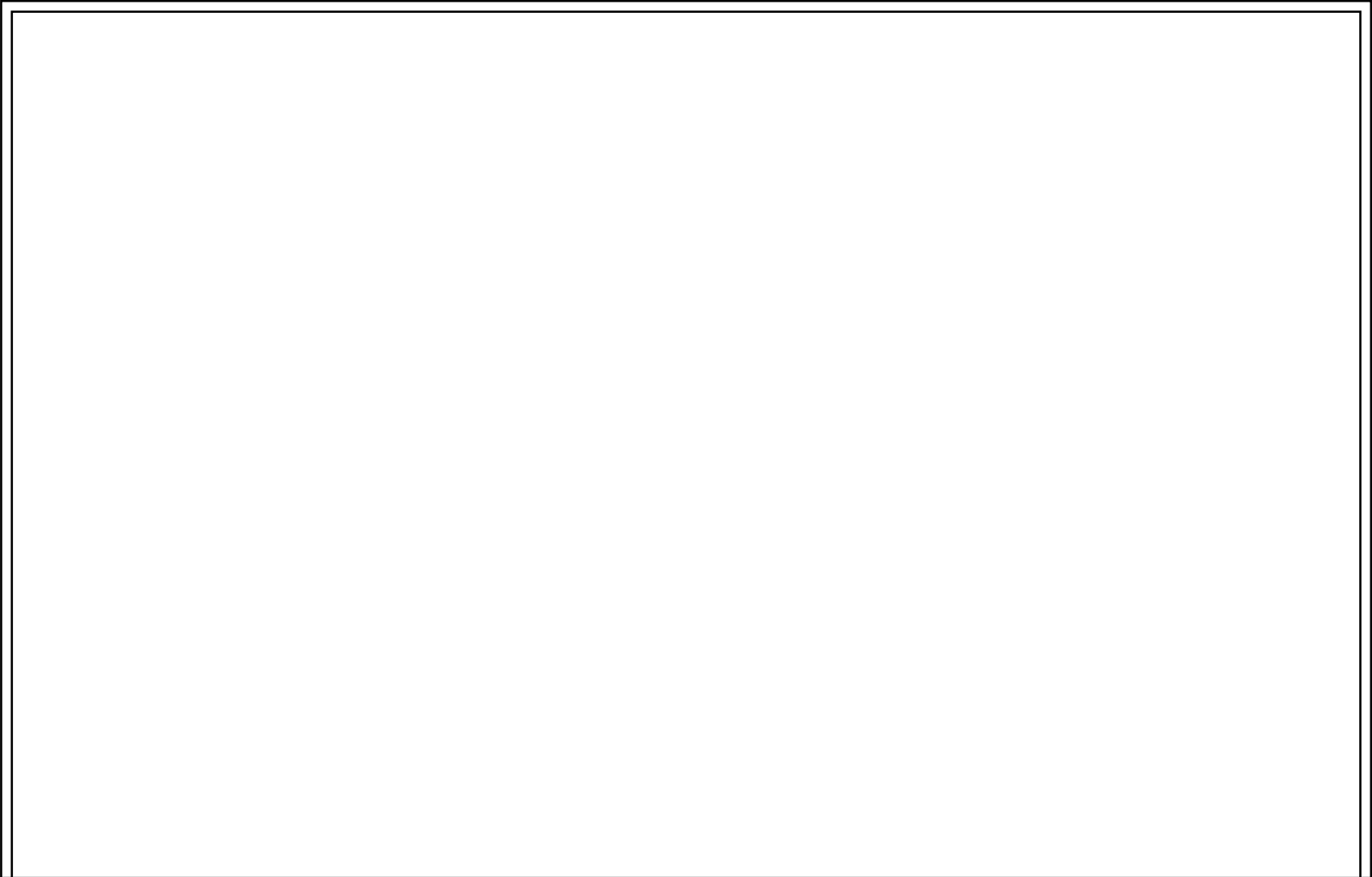
Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The ensemble cast is decent, the story fits the action/adventure essence of the heist film and one of the hottest music stars of the moment, Tip “T.I.” Harris, has a prominent role. Then why is the new film “Takers” such a seen-it-all-before exercise in action blandness? It feels like a total waste of all those resources.

Four writers were necessary to pen the screenplay regarding a gang of robbers – including Hayden Christensen, Chris Brown and Paul Walker – who keep a low profile by doing only one prominent and well-planned heist a year. The film takes great pains to show the sophistication of the gang in general, showcasing an unnecessary debate on foreign currency investment and plenty of expensive cigars. What it doesn’t express is why we should care or consider them anti-heroes.

Gordon Jennings (Idris Elba) is the de facto leader of the heist gang, and is the point man on the robbery that opens the film. The boys rob a major bank with a meticulous plan that foils security and a cop named Jack Welles (Matt Dillon). Welles becomes obsessed with the case, and uses his partner Eddie (Jay Hernandez) as a sounding board for his general frustration with the system.

Enter the “Ghost” (T.I.), a former member of the gang who took a bullet during one of their past jobs. After doing some prison time, he comes out of the joint with an expectation that he is owed something from everyone else. He has a plan for a big score that will involve the expertise of his former robber pals, an armored truck holdup that needs to come together in only five days. Not only will this break the “one heist a year” rule, but it gives little time to get a decent strategy in place.





The Gang's All Here: Hayden Christensen, Chris Brown, T.I. and Idris Elba Make the Plan in 'Takers'
© Screen Gems, Inc.

Further complicating the circumstance is Gordon's sister Naomi (Marianne Jean-Baptiste), just out of rehab and looking to her brother to stay clean. Also Jake (Michael Ealy) has just got engaged to Rachel (Zoe Saldana) and conveys a mistrust of the Ghost that may turn out to be intuitively true. As the clock ticks away toward the biggest heist in their careers, will the Takers be able to hold it together?

The motivations are murky in the set-up, which makes it difficult to latch on to one side or the other. Matt Dillon's cop is right out of obsessive law enforcer playbook, but there isn't enough back story to flesh out the character, and it clashes with the narrative involving the gang. The Ghost is an intriguing character, and T.I. does a competent job creating an oily thief that is difficult to trust, but the screenplay doesn't give enough reasoning for why presumably wealthy and smart criminals would take on the big job with a simple nod from an old and unreliable colleague.

In the genre of the heist movie, there needs to be something new happening, and that isn't the case here. In the cop farce earlier in the summer, "The Other Guys," clichés that they made fun of – excessive driving, shootouts and over-the-top pursuit – end up as so-called serious action in the Takers. The confrontation with a rival Russian gang near the end of the movie takes place in a hotel room, where weapons literally blast through the walls for an eternity, spewing feathers in the air, which was a reminder of one of the funnier scenes from The Other Guys. That's not good.

There is such a blasé attitude toward weaponry and explosives, it's a wonder the film was made in the current post-terrorism environment. Blowing a hole in the street in Los Angeles doesn't seem as comfortable and adventurous in a age where a community center near ground zero is debated for three weeks. The lack of ramifications for the firing of weapons and the use of plastic explosives rang false, even with several characters getting shot.



Police Squad: Matt Dillon and Jay Hernandez Are on the Case in 'Takers'
© Screen Gems, Inc.

But some of the elements of the film were notable. The action sequences were shot with clarity, as well as the gang's expensive and expansive lifestyle. T.I. was having fun and the audience loved him – especially when he had to dress up like a cop during the main heist – and he seemed like the only gang member with a sense of the law on his tail. The final confrontation with the law between the two robber brothers (Ealy and Brown) had a Butch and Sundance quality to it, with an out-of-focus perspective that actually was poignant.

This film basically needed more creativity, more motivational energy and less blowing up things/shooting big guns. The sound of a blasting cap and the ping of too many bullets is getting too common and pretty boring in movieland.

"Takers" opens everywhere August 27th. Featuring T.I., Matt Dillon, Hayden Christensen, Zoe Saldana, Idris Elba, Michael Ealy, Chris Brown and Marianne Jean-Baptiste. Screenplay by Peter Allen, Gabriel Casseus, John Luessenhop and Avery Duff, directed by John Luessenhop. Rated "PG-13"



[16]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [17]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [16]

© 2010 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 23 2024 - 12:33am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/11644/something-s-gotta-give-as-ti-matt-dillon-challenge-the-takers>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/chris-brown>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hayden-christensen>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/idris-elba>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jay-hernandez>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/john-luessenhop>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/marianne-jean-baptiste>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/matt-dillon>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/michael-ealy>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/ti>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/takers>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/zoe-saldana>
- [16] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>

[17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>