

‘Fast Five’ Furiously Finds Fun Factor in Franchise Finest

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 29, 2011 - 6:16pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Maybe director Justin Lin learned how to have fun directing the now-classic paintball episode of “Community.” Wherever he figured out that his movies need not be so damn self-serious or wordy, he took that knowledge to the set of “Fast Five,” a movie that this critic who hated “Fast & Furious” absolutely dreaded when it was first announced. Now I can’t wait for the inevitable sixth movie in the most unexpected mega-franchise of the new millennium.

“Fast Five” is ludicrous, impossible, ridiculous, and stupid...and I mean that as a compliment. When the film kicks it into gear and the cars, bullets, and bodies are flying fast, it is an incredibly effective action film. The calendar may say that Summer is a few months away, but the escapist entertainment that the season is known for starts today with the release of this rocking thrill ride, one of the most purely enjoyable movies in a long time. Yes, it defies logic at every turn (you could get wasted with a drinking game based purely on how many times Paul Walker’s character should be dead from a jump that would kill any man) and features dialogue that sounds like it was written by a 12-year-old, but that pre-teen knows how to conceive, stage, and execute what really matters in a movie like this — ACTION.



Fast Five

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

The opening scene of the fifth (and best) film in the series features Brian (Walker) and Mia (Jordana Brewster) breaking Dominic (Vin Diesel) out of a prison transport. Some time later, the two accomplices mosey on down to Rio (a great setting for a film like this one) at the behest of Vince (Matt Schulze, who hasn’t been in one of these movie since the first, “The Fast and the Furious”). He’s got a gig and he knows the

on-the-run Brian and Mia could use the money. Of course, Dom shows up to make sure it goes off without a hitch.

If it EVER went off without a hitch, there wouldn't be five movies in this series. After an amazing sequence involving multiple cars, a truck going into the side of a train, and a cliff dive that should have killed both participants, our three heroes find themselves the targets of both a Rio crime kingpin (Joaquim de Almeida) and the federal agents sent to capture Dominic and Brian. The latter are led by the moving brick wall known as Hobbs (Dwayne Johnson), who partners up with the gorgeous local Elena (Elsa Pataky).

To get revenge on the kingpin and yet stay one step ahead of the international law, Dominic and Brian need to call in some reinforcements. Enter a cast of familiar faces from the franchise including Roman (Tyrese Gibson, absent since “2 Fast 2 Furious”), Tej (Chris ‘Ludacris’ Bridges, also missing in action since #2), Han (Sung Kang, from “The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift” and “Fast & Furious”), Gisele (Gal Gadot, from the last film), and Leo (Tego Calderon) & Santos (Don Omar). The crew plans to steal \$100 million. Of course, the plan involves a lot of fast cars.



Fast Five

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

If one steps back and examines “Fast Five,” it's total nonsense. Most of the stunts would never work in the real world. Even video game designers would think twice about including them. And, apparently, everyone in Rio shoots blanks because the amount of gunfire that fails to connect with our heroes might break a record. The dialogue is also remarkably awful at times, including lines like “*This just went from Mission Impossible to Mission In-Freakin-Sanity.*”

But one is not meant to step back from “Fast Five.” One is meant to be plastered to the back of their seat by the testosterone-fueled action. And, in that department, “Fast Five” totally delivers. My biggest problem with the last film was that it didn't have enough action or driving to be truly enjoyable. “Fast Five” does sag a few times and is INSANELY long at almost two hours and fifteen minutes, but it's nearly impossible not to enjoy the driving scenes in this film on a purely visceral level. As they boom with some of the best auto-based sound design in a very long time, they almost turn your brain off for you.

Most importantly, for the first time, Lin seems to recognize that these movies SHOULD be ridiculous. Don't take yourself too seriously. Don't worry about suspension of disbelief. Everyone is trying to kill our heroes and they just stole four cop cars. Would they drag race those cop cars through Rio? HELL no. But it makes for a great scene if you just toss your disbelief out the window. Don't just suspend it. Don't even bring into the theater.



Fast Five
Photo credit: Universal Pictures

It's not just Lin who's having more fun — the cast is actually having a good time here for the first time in the franchise. Perhaps their mutual gigantism inspired each other but Diesel and Johnson clearly are having a blast and they simply rock in the long-anticipated throwdown that's not unlike The Thing going at it with Juggernaut. They don't just "fight." They throw each other through walls. As for the rest, Walker still bores me a bit but the rest of the cast are entertaining, beautiful, or both. They seem to fit well with the style over substance world of Carnival.

When I saw "The Fast and the Furious," I never would have guessed that I'd be reviewing a fifth film in this franchise only ten years later (and the end makes it feel like a sixth film is around the corner). After seeing the horrendous "Fast & Furious," I thought I'd never see another film in the franchise. Now, I kind of can't wait to see this one again.

"Fast Five" stars Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Jordana Brewster, Joaquim de Almeida, Tyrese Gibson, Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges, Sung Kang, Gal Gadot, Tego Calderon, Don Omar, Elsa Pataky, and Dwayne Johnson. It was written by Chris Morgan and directed by Justin Lin. It is rated PG-13 and was released on April 29th, 2011.



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