

## ‘Bullet to the Head’ Could Motivate You to Do Same

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 1, 2013 - 9:50am

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Rating: **1.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – These are the times that try a film critic’s soul. Right after the awards season, and the lofty artistic films, comes the dump zone of January and the rejected reel orphans of the “industry.” Sylvester Stallone, once an Oscar winner, now “entertains” us with harsh violence in the ‘Bullet to the Head.’

This is supposedly based on a graphic novel (that fancy term for comic book), but in what universe are we suppose to connect with a gun fetishist sociopath whose redeeming quality is that he loves his estranged, tattoo artist daughter? Stallone plays this guy as a cold blooded freak of nature (with some human growth hormone thrown in for his anti-aging), except when the story says he shouldn’t be that way. This role simply doesn’t fit either Stallone’s mumbly, aw-shucks persona of Rocky or his action Rambo-type character, and his assassin is so loathsome there are actual points in the film in which hope is generated for the “bad guys” to win. It’s a rambling, shambling mess, plus treats gunplay and bullet wounds so blithely that it could inspire another religion to counteract the dreadful emotions that emerge from experiencing it.

James Bonomo (Stallone) or Jimmy “Bobo” as he’s known, is a hit man of dubious origin. He and his partner (Jon Seda) are on a job, whacking a coked out ex-cop. The hit is successful, but good hearted Bobo decides not to shoot the hooker who is also in the room. This leads to the cop’s former partner, Kwan (Sung Kang) to track down Bobo in New Orleans. Instead of running him in, he wants to team with the killer, since they’ve both lost their partners, and the corruption that sullied the dead cop leads back to high level officials in the police department and a real estate mogul named Baptiste (Christian Slater).



Google Ivan Drago: Bobo (Sylvester Stallone) and Kwon (Sung Kang) in ‘Bullet to the Head’

*Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures*

Bobo doesn't want the partnership, but he's forced into it when Kwon is shot by the New Orleans cops. Instead of a hospital, Kwon is taken to Bobo's daughter Lisa (Sarah Shahi), a tattoo artist with "one year of med school." The powers behind the land grab, Baptiste and Morel (Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje) hire their own killer to get Bobo, a cold dude named Keegan (Jason Momoa). It seems like everybody in the Big Easy is after Bobo and Kwon, but it's anything but easy to bring them down.

This late career Stallone will be studied in future film classes for years (could even be a class), for it consists of the cynicism of what sells in the overseas markets, the shoot 'em ups and bad sequels that have nothing to do with Stallone the actor, but everything to do with the opening weekend in Tunisia. The story means nothing, as long as there is quality kills, plenty of gunplay and a few mumbled lines of dialogue that can be easily translated into any language. This special film also has room for Asian, African and Christian (Slater) characters, opening up further continents. Throw in a penguin and the opening numbers in Antarctica are through the roof.

The only thing is softening the blow of all this is imagining the sweat of junior movie executives after the gun control debate started anew, and they realized they had Schwarzenegger ("The Last Stand") and Stallone opening in gun worshiping movies, with plenty of shrapnel disassembling craniums – it's called "Bullet to the Head," for Wayne LaPierre sakes. Projectiles fly, and skull pieces disconnect, a chilling diversion while chewing popcorn. Also this is director Walter Hill, who used to know a thing or two about interesting action pictures ("48 Hours," "The Warriors"). For this one, he seems to only want to make sure the bullet wounds and explosions looked real. It's all so empty.

And speaking of empty, that seems to be Stallone's approach to any character development lately. His Bobo is a foul-mouthed Terminator-type, with less of a personality. The fact that the screenplay makes him goo-goo eyed for his daughter is so weak it almost collapses. Why would anyone who spent his life coldly killing all in his path care about family? It's a warm fuzzy that becomes fodder for a case study in psychosis.



Tattoo You: Lisa (Sarah Shahi) in 'Bullet to the Head'  
Photo credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

There are some elements that are truly weird enough to be noticed. There is gratuitous nudity at odd points, including Stallone's daughter conveniently taking a bath, and a New Orleans party scene straight out of a community theater adaptation of Stanley Kubrick's "Eyes Wide Shut." Christian Slater has now aged into his Jack-Nicholson-light persona, and gratefully acted as if he were in a different film. Sarah Shahi, as Stallone's daughter, had an odd appeal as a tattoo expert, gloriously inked herself.

But everything you need to know about the plot of this turkey is summed up by two massive explosions in the film. Despite both those big booms, it cannot come near the nuclear level movie bomb that Rocky has given us in his final rounds.

*"Bullet to the Head" opens everywhere on February 1st. Featuring Sylvester Stallone, Christian Slater, Jason Momoa, Sung Kang, Jon Seda, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje and Sarah Shahi. Screenplay adapted by Alessandro Camon. Directed by Walter Hill. Rated "R"*



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