

## ‘World War Z’ Reminder of 1950s Apocalyptic Films

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 21, 2013 - 4:00pm

- [Apocalypse](#) [2]
- [Brad Pitt](#) [3]
- [David Morse](#) [4]
- [Fana Mokoena](#) [5]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [6]
- [James Badge Dale](#) [7]
- [Mireille Enos](#) [8]
- [Movie Review](#) [9]
- [Paramount Pictures](#) [10]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [11]
- [World War Z](#) [12]
- [Zombies](#) [13]



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Earnest family man, check. Somber, ineffective bureaucrats, check. Monsters in nature created through mankind’s hubris, check. Unintentional laughs, check and checkmate. That describes every plot of a 1950s end-of-the-world movie treatment, and the latest Brad Pitt film, “World War Z.”

There should be a correction...this is a 1950s apocalyptic movie if the budget was \$125 million, and directed by fancy pants Marc Forster (“Monster’s Ball”). “World War Z” is about the attack of the zombies, but it’s fairly vague why they happen to attack. These brand of zombies are fast and over-relentless, unless you are very, very quiet – then they become the docile moaners that we know and love. This is based on the novel by Max Brooks, and I’m sure the film leaves some of the detail out. This story plops us right into the middle of the action, and it’s summer-movie intense. Brad Pitt, in essence, is playing the same character as in “Moneyball” – a save-the-day professional who is also a gooey eyed family man. Is this his new character fate? “World War Z” is a decent “PG-13” night at the movies, perfect for a group scare and a couple of follow-up nervous laughs.

Gerry Lane (Brad Pitt) is a retired stay-at-home Dad, whose former job was to go into war zone hotspots for the United Nations. While stuck in a traffic jam in his native Philadelphia, a contingent of creatures begin to attack the city. It is a zombie invasion, and they’re looking for recruits (via their vicious bite, naturally). This is happening all over the United States and the world, mostly in big cities, and Gerry is helicoptered from Philly with his wife Karen (Mirelle Enos) and kids onto a remote aircraft carrier, by orders of the U.N. General Secretary Thierry(Fana Mokoena).



We Gotta Get Outta This Place: Brad Pitt and Family in ‘World War Z’  
Photo credit: Paramount Pictures



Gerry was the best of the best, and his U.N. assignment – in exchange for keeping his family safe – is to seek a cure for the zombie virus, and there are rumors that the source area for the outbreak in South Korea may hold the key. When Gerry’s team is ambushed by zombies there, it leads to a manic escape to overrun Israel, and eventually to a research lab in Wales. It’s going to take a little ingenuity to stop the amassing undead attackers.

This concept is action-packed, and starts right away. There are very few non-action sequences, until it slows down a bit at the research lab. These aren’t your Daddy’s zombies, they run like the wind and keep pursuing like ants on a sandhill. Quite frankly, in observation, it seems impossible to stop such a hoard. But just like any good 1950s beginning-of-the-end tale, there are possibilities, and it involves the heroes of science. Global warming symbolism, perhaps?

Brad Pitt, although he makes an odd haircut choice, is steady as a straight arrow family man and is as indestructible as Bruce Willis in a Die Hard movie. He keeps his serious facade throughout, but hopefully there will be a gag reel on the DVD extras, because some of the zombies he encounters are laugh-out-loud funny. It seems like a strategy to cement his new heroic image, down to the wind romantically whipping that odd hair.

This has dynamite special effects, although they won’t be too enhanced by the optional 3D. The zombie attacks, especially in Israel, are surreal in how the collective undead breach bullets and obstacles (more symbolism for Jerusalem?). The constant rewriting of zombies rules – from the initial slow moving relentlessness to the addition of both speed and numbers – are part of an entertainment evolution that won’t end well, or else get set for a zombie Brady Bunch remake. The obsession with the undead in current show culture is fascinating...do we wish to join them?



Into the Breach: Zombies in Israel During ‘World War Z’  
Photo credit: Paramount Pictures

Back to the 1950s movie comparison – the film ends in a lab, with docile scientists allowing Gerry to come in and take over their lair (equipped with working electricity, despite the breakdown of the world order). This is right out of black-and-white heaven from the ‘50s post nuclear paranoia. So what does “World War Z” say about modern times? America loves zombies.

It’s time to gather a few buds, dip into the theatrical make-up kit – there’s always someone in the gang that has one – don your tattered clothing and gear up with your best zombie look for a trip to the movies. And bonus...you can run as fast as you can.

*“World War Z” opens everywhere on June 21st in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D theaters and show times. Featuring Brad Pitt, Mireille Enos, David Morse, Fana Mokoena and James Badge Dale. Screenplay adapted by Matthew Michael Carnahan, Drew Goddard and Damon Lindelof. Directed by Marc Forster. Rated “PG-13”*



[14]

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**Links:**

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
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- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/brad-pitt>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/david-morse>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/fana-mokoena>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
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- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/mireille-enos>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/paramount-pictures>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/world-war-z>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/zombies>
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