

Channing Tatum, Jamie Foxx in 'White House Down'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 26, 2013 - 10:24am

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Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – How could a movie in which the President shoots a rocket from the back of a limousine during a car chase on the White House lawn possibly be boring? Roland Emmerich somehow finds a way in the numbing “White House Down,” a movie that make absolutely no sense but fails to entertain as B-movie escapism (as his movies sometimes have in the past). I found this one just tedious, bloated, and silly. There’s such a fine line between being over-the-top enough to be entertaining and just being ridiculous. “White House Down” is ridiculous.

The movie in which Magic Mike and Django stop World War III opens with a wannabe Secret Service Agent named Cale (Channing Tatum) taking his daughter Emily (Joey King) on a tour of the White House. The too-smart-for-her-age young woman is a huge fan of politics and adores the charismatic President Sawyer (Jamie Foxx). As with most of these “Die Hard in a ____” movies, Cale picks the wrong day to bring his daughter to the place he wants to work when the most insanely unorganized and unbelievable assault on a government in world history begins.



White House Down

Photo credit: Sony Pictures

This is not a spoiler. It’s revealed very early. The head of President Sawyer’s Secret Service detail is about to retire. In fact, it’s his last day. And he’s going out with a coup. Agent Walker (James Woods) feels like his President and his country have betrayed him, especially after the death of his son in a covert op authorized by Sawyer. And so he unleashes the most infamous enemies of the U.S. government, including

Jason Clarke & Jimmi Simpson, on the White House. In an assault that seems both simultaneously incredibly coordinated (they have heavy weapons on the roof to take down any air attack designed to stop them) and stunningly stupid (they couldn't wait till off-hours when there might not be a tour going on?), Walker's gang takes the White House.

As the coordinator for the Secret Service (Maggie Gyllenhaal), Speaker of the House (Richard Jenkins), and Vice President (Michael Murphy) worry about who will run the country if the President is captured, Cale goes to work. He not only has to save the daughter who was detached from the tour group just before the assault but he gets to the President's side and becomes his only hope. Can Cale get the President to safety, go back and get his daughter, and stop World War III? Of course he can.



White House Down

Photo credit: Sony Pictures

Echoes of "Olympus Has Fallen" will naturally ring in viewer's ears and the similarities are even more than you might expect going in. The scenes of assault on the actual White House feel like they could have been cribbed from the same storyboards, although Emmerich's technical team is undeniably more accomplished. The actual structure where the majority of "WHD" takes place feels more legitimate in its design and Emmerich is better at staging the big sequences than Fuqua. There's also not as much violence in "WHD" although it's one of the hardest PG-13s in history if one pauses for even a second to think about what's happening. More than one person meets the fate that accompanies a live grenade. That's OK in a PG-13. Saying the f-word twice? Too dangerous.

I'm getting off target. A movie like "White House Down" makes that easy to do. I know what you're probably thinking at this point. Taking shots at a Roland Emmerich movie is like a music critic panning a boy band CD. It's too easy. Emmerich's films don't set out to be anything more than escapist entertainment (criticisms of his blatant xenophobia aside) and so we shouldn't be too hard on them. Embracing that idea, I won't be too hard on "White House Down." I won't consider the first dull performance by Tatum since his career resurgence. I won't comment on how everyone but Foxx & Clarke are playing it way too straight when this material demanded a bit more of a wink and a nod to its ridiculousness. And I won't talk about the fact that it's at least 30 minutes too long (the set-up is ENDLESS...seriously, you can show up half an hour late).

I'll just leave it at this – the worst thing that a B-movie summer blockbuster can be is boring. Other than that car chase scene, I was numbingly bored. There aren't enough twists (the big twist in the final act is one everyone who has seen a movie before will see coming), the action scenes aren't memorable, and the dialogue is dull. "White House Down" is the thing that Emmerich films want to be least of all – forgettable.

"White House Down" stars Channing Tatum, Jamie Foxx, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Jason Clarke, Richard Jenkins, Joey King, James Woods, Nicolas Wright, Jimmi Simpson, Michael Murphy, and Rachelle Lefevre. It was written by James Vanderbilt and directed by Roland Emmerich. It will be released on Friday, June 28, 2013 and is rated PG-13.



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