

Quentin Tarantino Stays Familiar in 'The Hateful Eight'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 25, 2015 - 6:09am

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Story-wise, there is not much difference in “The Hateful Eight” – regarding themes and violence – that writer/director Quentin Tarantino hasn’t explored before. But it is also an outrageous and big western tale, and it’s presented in some theaters in a huge 70mm screen format.

It is special that QT has the power and energy to re-introduce this old style movie format to modern audiences, and he matches the length and breadth of some of those epic stories of the past (think “How the West was Won combined with “Pulp Fiction”). What he doesn’t do is tap anything new in his story telling. There is Samuel L. Jackson again, out for a mysterious type of revenge. Peppered in the dialogue is the n-word, yet again, ad nauseam. But at least it’s better and more expressive than “Django Unchained,” which I didn’t like. And if you like Django, then “The Hateful Eight” will further float your QT boat.

There is a stagecoach to Red Rock in the latter part of the 1800’s, and on that coach is John Ruth (Kurt Russell), a bounty hunter, and his prisoner Daisy Domergue (Jennifer Jason Leigh). Another notorious bounty hunter, Marquis Warren (Samuel L. Jackson), is marooned in an impending blizzard, and hails the stagecoach to hitch a ride.



Marquiss (Samuel L. Jackson), Daisy (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and John Ruth (Kurt Russell) in 'The Hateful Eight'

Photo credit: The Weinstein Company

The crew ends up at Minnie's Haberdashery, an outpost along the trail, but Minnie is nowhere to be found. Inside is Bob (Demian Bichir), who claims he's working at the store, along with cowboy Joe Gage (Michael Madsen), General Sandy Smithers (Bruce Dern) and hangman Oswaldo Mobray (Tim Roth). The group settles in to ride out the storm, but something is not right.

There is spectacle, humor and the usual Tarantino violent antics, but it's not enough to justify its length as a story. The book of the film is divided into chapters, and some – like the initial confrontation on the stagecoach trail – are better than others, and several of those chapters are padded with flashbacks and long exposition. QT also loves his blood, and there are buckets of it. The familiarity of Tarantino's style is part of the film's strength, and the infiltration of that style in a western setting for the most part works out.

The roles are well cast, with the great Jennifer Jason Leigh a standout. She's a nasty lady in this scenario, and is psychologically and physically punished for her assertions – QT has always had a weird relationship with women in his films. Kurt Russell is always welcome, and relishes his mutton-chopped persona. Samuel L. Jackson is a QT stock player, and his originality in that personality is reaching its expiration date. Tarantino had to find some new stuff for the old character type to do, but it didn't help the fact that it has all been done before.

The background team in the film was solid, with the exception of Channing Tatum – he just didn't seem he belonged in the Old West. Bruce Dern was at his craggy best, as he comfortably shifts to old man roles. Minnie and her team were talked about in the first three quarters of the film, then appears in a flashback exactly how the folks had described them. That was a highlight of the film. Michael Madsen made for a surprisingly good cowboy, and Tim Roth as a hoot as a British fop in the harsh land.



John Ruth Confronts Marquiss in 'The Hateful Eight'

Photo credit: The Weinstein Company

But oh that n-word – Quentin Tarantino is obsessed with it. He should carved it into the marble above his expensive fireplace. After "Django Unchained," I'd think he'd put a moratorium on the use of the word, but no, the late 1800s were apparently a hotbed for the excessive use of it, once again. If it doesn't bug you, fine, I'm quite sick of it myself. C'est l'artiste, si vous plait.

Catch this in its 70mm widescreen glory if you have a notion to see it, because all new cinema experiences are unique in its different formats. And have a Merry Bloody Christmas, and an "eightful" New Year, QT style.

"The Hateful Eight" has a limited run beginning December 25th, and will be shown in 70mm in select theaters, including at the Music Box Theatre – 3733 North Southport Avenue – in Chicago. See local listings for other theaters and show times. Featuring Samuel L. Jackson, Kurt Russell, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Bruce Dern, Michael Madsen, Demian Bichir, Tim Roth and Channing Tatum. Written and directed by Quentin Tarantino. Rated "G"...just kidding, it's a hard "R"



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