

Predictable, Unfunny 'The Hustle' Has No Game

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 10, 2019 - 6:53am

- [1964](#) [2]
- [1988](#) [3]
- [Alex Sharp](#) [4]
- [Anne Hathaway](#) [5]
- [Bedtime Story](#) [6]
- [Dirty Rotten Scoundrels](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer](#) [9]
- [Movie Review](#) [10]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [11]
- [Rebel Wilson](#) [12]
- [Rob Delaney](#) [13]
- [The Hustle](#) [14]
- [Tim Blake Nelson](#) [15]



Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – As the “Oceans Eight” remake of last year proved, it is simply not enough to redo a film and flip the gender focus. Anne Hathaway may be the kiss of death for this genre, as she appeared both in O8 and the current “The Hustle,” which in turn is a remake of “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels” (1988). Rebel Wilson, doing what Rebel Wilson does, portrays her sidekick.

Hathaway and Wilson have little chemistry together, but that is the least of sins for “The Hustle.” Not only is the title lazy as hell, but the whole she-bang (ha) is flat and unfunny. It’s been years since I’ve seen the original – which was in itself a remake of the 1964 film “Bedtime Story” – but both those films must have more life than this tepid exercise in dreck. The screenplay credits list four names, a sure tip that the film we’re about to see is lost, but two of the names are of the original Dirty Rotten screenwriters (Paul Henning and Stanley Shapiro, both dead). The two hacks to blame are the very much alive, female Jac Schaeffer and male Dale Launer, although their screenplay is DOA. Both Hathaway and Wilson are only as good as their source material, and although they flog this story like the dead horse, they can’t save it. It’s 90 minutes of mostly empty air and leaden jokes, and they even have a man out-con them to boot (thanks to critic colleague Pam Powell for pointing that out).

Penny (Rebel Wilson) is a low end con artist, mostly trading on a man’s propensity to pay for a woman’s boob job (har-de-har-har). She decides to go to Europe to continue her game, and runs into Josephine (Anne Hathaway), who pretty much owns the con territory in that neck of woods. Penny begs Jo to help her learn more about her techniques, and in a painful montage, does just that.



Hair Twirl, Not Funny: Anne Hathaway & Rebel Wilson of 'The Hustle'

Photo credit: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

After succeeding in their first con – with rich dudes dumber than our current President – they have a difference of opinion, and settle on a bet to negotiate it ... 500K to the first woman that can con a Zuckerberg-type dot com millionaire (Alex Sharp) out of his ill-gotten gains. Faster than you can say Privacy Policy, our two licentious gals are trying to out-hustle each other.

This film feels like it's four hours long. I checked the time on my phone so much I could have been busted for piracy (oh sweet hope). The preview night atmosphere felt like the scene in "All That Jazz," where the Bob Fosse character (representing me) was stoically silent while his cast (the preview audience) was laughing like hyenas during a script reading. There was not one single decent laugh for me, and I happen to like Rebel Wilson's schtick when it's working (Hathaway, however, should stay far away from comedy). Well, there was one laugh, which I will outline later in the review.

The lead actresses were flop sweating like southern sheriffs trying to shoehorn guffaws from the DOA screenplay. Isn't the Zuckerbergian dot com guy past its expiration, must we see the hoodie again? And the way Alex Sharp was interpreting the role was the character equivalent of applying a dentist drill ... I actually felt sorry for Hathaway and Wilson having to play opposite to it. I'm sure their large paychecks (plus a percentage of the gross) was enough for a chuckling, "I don't care." Because that's how it felt to me. And forgettabout Hathaway's strange "accent," it's literally skin crawling.



Zuckerberg Hoodie, Not Funny: Alex Sharp & Rebel in 'The Hustle'
Photo credit: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Okay, now for the only laugh. The film ends in London, and the person conned made me chortle out loud. It was none other than the great Rob Delaney, who absolutely is the best as the husband in the Amazon Prime/BBC series "Catastrophe." His mere presence, in such a bizarre cameo, made me think it was a lark on his part. I don't think he read one line of the DOA script, except for his brief interlude. And he played it so much like his series character, that I think it was the character, which was so meta it stings. Thank you, London casting agent.

The Delaney cameo was worth a full point for "The Hustle," from a 1/5 to a 2/5. Hell, if Delaney's Catastrophe co-star Sharon Horgan would have accented his appearance, I would have bumped this goddamn thing to 3. I'm mad with power, or maybe just mad with madness. Thank you Rob.

"The Hustle" opens everywhere on May 10th. Featuring Anne Hathaway, Rebel Wilson, Tim Blake Nelson, Alex Sharp and Rob Delaney. Screenplay adapted by Jac Schaeffer and Dale Launer. Directed by Chris Addison. Rated "PG-13"



[16]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [17]
Editor and Film Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [16]

© 2019 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Sep 23 2024 - 5:19am):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/29393/predictable-unfunny-the-hustle-has-no-game>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/1964>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/1988>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/alex-sharp>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/anne-hathaway>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/bedtime-story>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/dirty-rotten-scoundrels>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocontent>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/metro-goldwyn-mayer>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/rebel-wilson>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/rob-delaney>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/the-hustle>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/tim-blake-nelson>
- [16] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>

[17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>