

Boot This Reboot of 'Men In Black International'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 13, 2019 - 10:48pm

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Men in Black International” is less a reboot than a frantic attempt at CPR for the once viable franchise ... which never should have made it to a fourth installment. That’s not to say this is totally unwatchable. But it’s a kind of okay not-that-great-not-that-awful iteration which neither reminds us why we liked the series in the first place nor has much of a reason to exist.

Tommy Lee Jones – who had mentally checked out after the first film – and Will Smith are gone, along with the two actors snappy chemistry. They’re replaced by an international crew in a fruitless attempt to freshen things up. Tessa Thompson is a science nerd who had an alien encounter as a young girl, and made it her mission to find her way into the organization. Her “Thor: Ragnarok” co-star Chris Hemsworth (Thor himself) portrays Agent H, a lazy pretty boy who manages to keep wriggling out of trouble despite his sloppiness. She is reluctantly accepted as a probationary recruit by Miss O (Emma Thompson) and sent to sniff out trouble in the London branch run by High T (Liam Neeson), looking like he has better movies to be in.



Chris Hemsworth, Tessa Thompson and Pawny in 'Men In Black International'

Photo credit: Columbia Pictures

The action takes them on a globe-trotting journey worthy of a Bond film, as it jaunts from London to Paris, then to Naples and Morocco. But director F. Gary Gray never manages to find the right tone, as he doesn't do zany, so he instead just blows through the action sequences with a let's-get-this-over-with kind of feel. And for all the attempts to flesh out the Men in Black world, there's not much new to see except vague memories of things you probably have seen before.

While the 1997 original made even its bit players memorable, you may have trouble remembering the names of the leads in this version. The chemistry Hemsworth and Thompson displayed so effortlessly in "Thor: Ragnarok" is in short supply here, and they desperately could have used a better script than what they have to work with.

The saving grace is the introduction of Pawny (voice of Kumail Nanjiani). He's a living chess piece who pledges himself to Tessa Thompson's character after the death of his "queen." It's the kind of character who sounds like he was thought up in a focus group to appeal to kids, and also the one my seven-year-old twins instantly liked. Nanjiani manages to wring a decent amount of laughs out of material that otherwise never rises above amiable.



Kumail Nanjiana is the Voice of Pawny in 'Men In Black International'

Photo credit: Columbia Pictures

"Men in Black International" was right up the twins alley. They had seen and loved the original, and in the reimagining they got a hoot out of the creatures, effects, and globe trotting interplay in this world of humans and aliens living together. But parents may wonder why the Men In Black creators still haven't been able to think outside the box of this cookie cutter and increasingly tired formula.

"Men in Black International" opens everywhere on May 31st in IMAX, RPX and regular screenings. See local listings for format theaters and show times. Featuring Chris Hemsworth, Tessa Thompson, Liam Neeson, Emma Thompson, Kumail Nanjiani and Rebecca Ferguson. Written by Matt Holloway and Art Marcum. Directed by F. Gary Gray. Rated "PG-13"



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