

'The Fate of the Furious' is a Vehicle Running on Fumes

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 13, 2017 - 4:17pm

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Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Bigger, Dumber, and Duller...that's the name of the game this time in this ongoing franchise which is now so ludicrous it makes Bond films seem like the epitome of realism. While it's true this is the first time Oscar winners and a "Fast and the Furious" film have ever been associated together, there's a dearth of inspiration in this eighth go around, as this series is now operating almost completely on autopilot.

This long-running series has collected more characters than you might think over the years, and nearly all the big players are back – here joined this time by Oscar winner Charlize Theron playing a cyberterrorist named Cipher, out to get her hands on some nuclear warheads. The plot pits Dominic Toretto (Vin Diesel) against the "Family" he's been yammering about for eight movies now, without the pall of Paul Walker's death to give the overworked cliché any meaning anymore. He double crosses Hobbs (Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson) after a secret government mission to retrieve a WMD in Berlin, and Dom appears to go rogue in cahoots with Theron's Cipher. But the audience at a Fast and The Furious film doesn't expect much drama from Vin Diesel's lunkheaded chrome dome, and so his Fate is never really in doubt.



The Ever-Growing Gang of 'The Fate of the Furious'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

As for Theron, she's a suitably slinky villainess. Clad in a variety of skin tight outfits and sporting long blond dreads for some reason, she is a master manipulator out to turn Dom against his extended family, but gets remarkably little to do for a villain in a Fast And The Furious film. Other than driving away in a run of the mill jeep, most of her scenes consist of her staring at computer screens in her secret airplane hide-a-way, barking orders at an army of computer nerds – which didn't seem like a worthy use of her talents. At least fellow Oscar winner Helen Mirren gets to sneak some cheeky British humor into what amounts as a glorified cameo.

The series has made its name with its gonzo stunts, which turn the world into a human pinball game, but there's a desperation to the proceedings, and the thrill is largely gone. New director F. Gary Gray has shown he knows how to stage an inventive car chase when he directed "The Italian Job," but his set pieces in "Fate" lack the pizzazz that former directors Justin Lin and James Wan brought to the car stunts...which proudly defied the laws of physics. The film starts with Dom racing an old rust bucket that happens to be on fire – and in reverse – on the streets of Cuba, and the results are merely ho-hum rather than exhilarating.



Ice to Meet You: Driving on Frozen Russia in 'The Fate of the Furious'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

"The Fate Of The Furious" hopscotches from Cuba, to Berlin, to New York City and then a frozen naval base in Russia, but the sequences in New York were so particularly uninspired you wonder why they even bothered. Even the much anticipated beat down between The Rock's Hobbs and Jason Statham's Deckard Shaw never quite materializes into anything memorable.

I'll give the series some credit for coming up with one stunt for the highlight reel – involving a fleet of race cars chasing a nuclear submarine over ice – but it's a bit of a bladder-busting slog to get there. And despite the ever increasing box office, all signs point to Vin Diesel and company running on fumes.

"The Fate of the Furious" opens everywhere on April 14th. Featuring Vin Diesel, Jason Statham, Dwayne Johnson, Michelle Rodriguez, Tyrese Gibson, Chris "Ludacris" Bridges, Charlize Theron, Kurt Russell, Scott Eastwood and Helen Mirren. Written by Chris Morgan. Directed by F. Gary Gray. Rated "PG-13"



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