

## Film Review: Shoot 'Em Up



If your grandmother is anything like the average 65+ person, you will be able to confirm that they tend to complain about present day cinema and television. The general notion is that contemporary films are too aggressive and that even the protagonists are despicable people. After seeing *Shoot 'Em Up*, you might conclude that this opinion is not as old-fashioned as it seems. Better yet, in some cases it hits the nail right on its proverbial head.

The film starts off with a guy ("Smith", played by Clive Owen) sitting on the sidewalk, apparently waiting for the bus. Within five minutes, this very same fellow is locked in combat with a dozen of angry henchmen, commanded by Hertz (Paul Giamatti). Without a clear reason as to why these men are shooting at him, and with a random newborn placed into his custody, Mr Smith rolls from one shootout into the next and kills over a hundred people throughout the film. It makes you wonder where the antagonist, Hertz, keeps getting all his reinforcements from, huh? Oh, and of course Smith easily survives any and all attacks on his life. He repels them all with such –great ease that it prevents the film from getting even slightly exciting. I'm dead serious when I say that although 'Shoot 'Em Up' is marketed as a thriller, it really shouldn't be. Perhaps a mixture of improbable action and lame comedy would be a more appropriate label.

Yes, comedy. That brings me to my next point. The repetitive, countless and excessive gunfights aren't even the worst thing about the film; the seemingly endless stream of inexplicable characters and locations is flabbergasting: carrots, airplanes, a prostitute, a senator, a gun shop, a heavy metal club and a few abandoned factories. Had the director taken some time to explain the motives of the characters a bit more and progressed the story a bit slower, he would have gotten away with the many changes of scenery. However, seeing as half the film's time was used for gun firing, there was not a lot of time for conversations. So yeah: here we are, finding ourselves on yet another unlikely location in every scene. Sigh.

Although outnumbered by negative features, the film held some positive characteristics. For instance, the lead role is for a British actor with an admirable accent. You don't see that very often in Hollywood blockbusters nowadays. It could be just me, but Hertz really made me think of Louis van Gaal. Not only does he fail in achieving his goals time and again, he also expresses himself in a similar manner ('My God. Do we really suck or is this guy really that good?').

In conclusion, next time your grandmother has a strong opinion about something, you'd do wise not to dismiss her claims right away.

*By Tim Engelbert*



## Agenda

- 22 - 26 October Study Week
- 30 October Join Albion for a Studium Generale Lecture on Shakespeare
- 31 October Albion Halloween High Tea, 3 pm-5.30 pm, 1165 coffee room
- 1 November Albion Halloween Party, 9.30 pm, Mas y Mas
- 3 November Alumni Day of the English Department  
Students who want to help out on this day, send an e-mail to [m.h.noteboom@let.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:m.h.noteboom@let.leidenuniv.nl)
- 14 November Albion Filmnight: Canterbury Tales
- 11 December Angler Issue 3.2
- 23 - 26 January Albion London Trip: sign up from 29 October onwards

For up-to-date information, check [www.letteren.leidenuniv.nl/engels](http://www.letteren.leidenuniv.nl/engels) & [www.albionassociation.org](http://www.albionassociation.org)