

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - ROGUE NATION REVIEWED

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The *Mission: Impossible* franchise is one which surprises me with every sequel. This may be because *Mission: Impossible II* (2000) was so damn terrible—and not just compared to the original film, but terrible in general—I can't help but ask, "They're really making another one?" And while I'm always surprised at the series' continuation, I'm concurrently surprised at the slight improvement in quality accompanying each new film.



I didn't hold any high regards for the franchise's latest entry—*Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*—upon seeing the trailer, but I have to admit I actually enjoyed myself while watching it.

Glen Ryan Tadych

Four years after the fourth installment—*Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol* (2011)—IMF agent Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) finds himself out in the cold after the IMF is dissolved, desperately in search of an international criminal organization known as The Syndicate, led by Solomon Lane (Sean Harris), a former British Intelligence agent. As he's hunted by his own government, Hunt must make his way across the Eastern Hemisphere with the help of former IMF agents Benji Dunn (Simon Pegg), Luther Stickell (Ving Rhames), Williams Brandt (Jeremy Renner) and blacklisted British agent Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson) to intercept what Lane is after in order to prevent The Syndicate's expansion and destroy it.

I never actually thought it possible, but *Rogue Nation* is definitely my favorite sequel to *Mission: Impossible* (1996). I didn't think I would like the film at all to be honest, and my reason for that is because none of the *M:I* films have been actual espionage thrillers since the original. Despite being advertised and discussed as such, the *M:I* sequels are nothing more than action films, with minor espionage elements added to the third and fourth installments. I feel this is due in part to the climactic sequence on the London–Paris TGV in *Mission: Impossible*.

The original film's action sequence between the high-speed train and helicopter was more than enthralling, not to mention well-executed for mid-'90s filmmaking. The sequence holds up well today (almost 20 years later), but the problem with it is that ever since the first sequel was greenlit, all the producers wanted to do was top the original film's action, rather than paying attention to the whole package and telling a great espionage story. The films since *M:I II* have gradually been getting better at re-integrating espionage into the mix, with *Rogue Nation* doing the best job so far. The latest installment still has its fair share of action sequences, but the balance between action and espionage is handled

better, and overall more interesting than the last two installments.

One of the things I liked most regarding *Rogue Nation*'s story was the viewer has a clear-cut villain and less-complicated plot to focus on. From the get-go, everything is simply find and stop The Syndicate; a classic good guy versus bad guy story. There aren't any traitors within the protagonists—unlike Billy Crudup in *M:I III* (2006), which totally takes away from Philip Seymour Hoffman's awesome performance as arms dealer Owen Davian—and no uncertainties as to who's working with whom. And while I know the



**Mission: Impossible
Rogue Nation
Film Trailer**

entire story of *Mission: Impossible* revolved around a mole hunt, it works because it's the first movie. If you keep playing the mole card, it's no longer a surprise, but a crutch.

Now, that being said, Ferguson's character in *Rogue Nation* is difficult to figure out initially in terms of whose side she's on, but the film doesn't attempt to make her treachery



FRESH FILMS THIS WEEK &...



Fantastic Four

PG-13 100 min Action | Adventure | Sci-Fi

Four young outsiders teleport to an alternate and dangerous universe which alters their physical form in shocking ways. The four must learn to harness their new abilities and work together to save Earth from a former friend turned enemy.

Director: Josh Trank

Stars: Miles Teller, Kate Mara, Michael B. Jordan, Jamie Bell

Shaun the Sheep Movie

PG 85 min Animation | Adventure | Comedy

When Shaun decides to take the day off and have some fun, he gets a little more action than he bargained for. A mix up with the Farmer, a caravan and a very steep hill lead them all to the Big City and it's up to Shaun and the flock to return everyone safely to the green grass of home.

Directors: Mark Burton | Richard Starzak
Stars: Justin Fletcher, John Sparkes, Omid Djalili, Richard Webber

Ricki and the Flash

PG-13 102 min Comedy | Drama | Music

A musician who gave up everything for her dream of rock-and-roll stardom returns home, looking to make things right with her family.

Director: Jonathan Demme

Stars: Mamie Gummer, Meryl Streep, Sebastian Stan, Rick Springfield

The Gift

R 108 min Mystery | Thriller

A young married couple's lives are thrown into a harrowing tailspin when an acquaintance from the husband's past brings mysterious gifts and a horrifying secret to light after more than 20 years.

Director: Joel Edgerton

Stars: Jason Bateman, Rebecca Hall, Joel Edgerton, David Denman

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a mystery. From the beginning, the viewer sits there thinking, "Yeah, I don't trust her at all," and continues to follow along as the film progresses.

The film's scenery was top-notch, with locations including Minsk, Vienna, Casablanca and London. The film's major heist during the second act, set in Casablanca, was my favorite part of the film, featuring a thrilling underwater sequence set to absolutely no music, which I feel upped the suspense and bore similarity to the N.O.C. List theft in the original film. The film follows this up with one comically-ridiculous car and motorcycle chase that dulls the film's third act just a tad, but I feel the final confrontation between Hunt and Lane compensates for this.

I was also more fond of the protagonist team this time as opposed to the last two films. The absence of Rhames in *Ghost Protocol*, with the exception of a cameo at the end, was a downer, so I was happy to see him back in the game. Pegg really is great in this series. He and Cruise make an excellent and hilarious team, and I'm glad to see Pegg's character becoming more prominent since his small part in *M:I III*.

I was happy to see Ferguson play a female character who wasn't a love interest, could handle herself and kept everything casual with Cruise all the way through the film. It does irritate me at times in movies like these when the main male and female heroes have to end up together. This film gives us a more "Nice working with you" vibe, which works perfectly given what the heroes have to accomplish.

The only cast member I didn't really care for was Renner. I'm fond of him as Hawkeye in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, but he didn't bring that level of acting and humor into this film. He was nothing more than an empty shell throughout the movie, and any of the times he was meant to be funny didn't quite play out that way to me. His jokes felt somewhat forced, and he really didn't have much to offer the other characters or the story as it progressed. I was actually more fond of Alec Baldwin's role as C.I.A. Director Alan Hunley, as minimal as his part was, mainly because I liked the idea of the original (and my favorite) Jack Ryan playing a C.I.A. director in this film.

And on another note regarding the cast, one thing I found odd was the complete omission of Hunt's wife Julia, played by Michelle

...NEXT WEEK



The Man from U.N.C.L.E.

PG-13 116 min - Action | Adventure | Comedy

In the early 1960s, CIA agent Napoleon Solo and KGB operative Ilya Kuryakin participate in a joint mission against a mysterious criminal organization, which is working to proliferate nuclear weapons.

Director: Guy Ritchie

Stars: Alicia Vikander, Henry Cavill, Armie Hammer, Elizabeth Debicki

Straight Outta Compton

R Biography | Drama | Music

The group NWA emerges from the streets of Compton, California in the mid-1980s and revolutionizes pop culture with their music and tales about life in the hood.

Director: F. Gary Gray

Stars: O'Shea Jackson Jr., Corey Hawkins, Jason Mitchell, Neil Brown Jr.

Mistress America

R 84 min Comedy

A lonely college freshman's life is turned upside down by her impetuous, adventurous soon-to-be stepsister.

Director: Noah Baumbach

Stars: Seth Barrish, Juliet Brett, Andrea Chen, Michael Chernus

Underdogs

106 min Animation | Adventure | Family

A young man named Amadeo sets off on an unexpected adventure with the players of his beloved Foosball game.

Director: Juan José Campanella

Stars: Gabriel Almirón, Federico Cecere, Ezequiel Cipols, Luciana Falcón



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Monaghan in *M:I III*. She was thought to be dead in *Ghost Protocol*, only revealed to be alive at the film's conclusion with Hunt watching over her from a distance. Monaghan's character wasn't referenced visually or in dialogue in *Rogue Nation*, which begs the question: Why have Hunt get married at all if you're just going to eventually write her out without explanation? But honestly, I'm okay with Hunt not having a wife, just as James Bond doesn't have one—with the exception of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969). My only gripe is that if you are going to introduce that significant a love interest, it's best you keep her in the story unless you kill or write her off in a way that doesn't seem lame.

The omission of Hunt's wife, return of deception and stealing secrets, and reference to the N.O.C. List theft in *Mission: Impossible* make *Rogue Nation* a great follow-up to the original film. You can go from the first film to the fifth, not get confused and just be along for the ride. And though Cruise is 53, he's still performing his own crazy stunts, which brings an unexpected level of humor to the film more so than awesomeness. All in all, *Rogue Nation* is a fun, exciting movie that finally brings a little more appeal to the *M:I* franchise, and brings the level of quality just that much closer to the original film.

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