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Tropic Thunder as a Comedy Then and Now

“It’s just corn syrup you guys! Blood flavored…corn syrup.” As Tugg Speedman says, after not believing that the film director blew up after stepping on a landmine, is a prime example of a moment that both satirizes Hollywood and can be enjoyed by viewers. The movie “Tropic Thunder” is a comedy movie written in 2008 that has managed to hold its own over the years and is still funny to this day. The movie is shown to be a sharp and funny satire that lasts through its relevant satire of Hollywood’s penchant for remakes, horrid executive directors, extreme method actors and overall relevance to this day.

A shining example of why the movie is still relevant is that it, a movie from 2008, predicted the overuse of older franchises. Right from the outset of the movie, in the trailer portion of the movie, it shows the endless sequels of the scorcher franchise and even a reboot. The movie shows Hollywood’s issue of continuing to churn out sequels as an easy cash grab until it fails. This issue can be seen in *Men In Black: International* where an article by Rappler described the movie as, “it is really just an unimaginative money grab, with the studios delivering plain popcorn entertainment that has just enough salt and butter to make it tolerable enough to sit through” (Cruz). Cruz is talking about how this reboot of the beloved *Men In Black* franchise was just an attempt by Hollywood to just make another movie as a cash grab. The movie’s satire of this aspect of Hollywood is as spot on now as it was when the movie was first released.

The movie does not end its satire of Hollywood at satirizing the industry as a whole, the continues by lampooning the slew of horrid studio executives. The movie criticizes them through the character of Les Grossman who hurls insults at everyone like, “Oh okay, Flaming Dragon, fuck face. First take a big step back and literally FUCK YOU OWN FACE!” when speaking with a drug cartel attempting to ransom an actor. This is still an issue in Hollywood as seen in a Vice article published in 2017 about the actions of Harvey Weinstein; a former employee of his recalled, “’You're a dildo! *You* are a dildo. Say it, “I'm a dildo”’” (Kumar). Just a single small portion of the article is enough to show that the issue is still alive and well in Hollywood. The abuse of power in Hollywood is still an issue that satires like *Tropic Thunder* continue to combat.

The movie continues its satire of Hollywood all the way down to the actors themselves. Drug addled Hollywood actors to overly intense self-important actors are all satire in the movie, but the kind of actor that will be the focus will be the method actor. Method actors are satirized by the character Kirk Lazarus, who is a white Australian actor that underwent a “pigmentation alteration procedure” in order to play the role of an African American character. The actions of the character show some of the absurd extremes some method actors go. The character satirizes actors like Jared Leto who in preparation for his role as Joker in the movie *Suicide Squad* “gifted the cast and crew with a litany of horrible items: used condoms, a dead pig, a live rat [and] watched footage of brutal crimes online” (Bastién). It is clear that method actors going too far is still an issue in Hollywood after all these years.

Arguing that being a smart satire does not make it a funny movie is a justifiable stance; however, the movie is also a fantastic comedy. The movie is rife with funny scenes, one of which is when the character Tugg Speedman is being interviewed and upon hearing “somebody close to you said, ‘one more flop and its over’” and replied with “somebody said they were close to me?” The movie is not limited to overt in-your-face humor, the movie also places the character Kevin Sanduskey in various awkward positions. An example of this is at the end of one scene, the character was attempting to get a high five from someone only to be awkwardly ignored by everyone. The movie’s humor is also not limited by time as a user on Rotten Tomatoes in November of 2019 said, “There is rarely a scene that doesn't generate a chuckle. It's smart satire with a really good cast and a great script” (M). The movie’s many humorous are clearly still relevant as viewers from as recently as 2019 are still compelled to put in the effort to write a review.

Even after 11 years, *Tropic Thunder* has managed to remain as an effective satire of Hollywood while also remaining funny. Overall, the movie’s satire of remakes, executive directors, and method actors have all remained hilarious and relevant.

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