

The latest in movies, music, theater and more

Hot Ticket

WHO'S NEXT?

By REED TUCKER

HE'S Bored, James Bored. "I'd rather break this glass and slash my wrists" than play James Bond again, Daniel Craig said in October.

If the actor is truly bailing out, who's suiting up? Five Bond experts weigh in about who should take over the role.

Rupert Friend

"I have been very impressed at his versatility and skill as a thoughtful action hero. His performance as CIA operative Peter Quinn in 'Homeland' was top-notch, and I'm confident he would make a perfect 007." — Jeffery Deaver, author of Bond novel "Carte Blanche"



Ewan McGregor

"He fits [author Ian] Fleming's 007 concept. He studied alongside Daniel Craig in London. He would be a hard and strong Bond."

— James Bond Gunnar Schäfer, founder of the James Bond Museum in Sweden



Idris Elba

"He's a smart actor that would bring some diversity of perspective to the role. And, of course, he looks great in a suit." — Kali Caldwell, CIA entertainment-industry liaison



David Beckham

According to Irish bookmaker Boyle-Sports, Bond fans are laying down money that the former footballer will become the next 007. Odds are slim, however. Beckham is currently a 66-1 long shot.



Daniel Craig

"I would take a heavy bet that Daniel Craig will be Bond for the next movie and that Sam Mendes will be persuaded back to direct." — David Black, chairman of the James Bond International Fan Club



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Daniel Craig phones it in for latest 007 caper



The highlights of what may be Daniel Craig's last Bond film are the homages to earlier, exciting 007 adventures.

A license to kill is also a license to not kill," M lectures his new boss in the 24th James Bond film, "Spectre." Well, it's not a license to bore as much as this bloated drag manages to do.

After a smashing opening sequence with a rooftop chase set against Day of the Dead observances in Mexico City, we're plunged into a patchy plot (basically the same as the last "Mission: Impossible" outing) that's little more than an excuse for random homages to the series' illustrious past — reminding us how utterly mediocre this one is.

This follow-up to his hugely successful "Skyfall" brings back a grumpy Daniel Craig for his fourth (and I'd guess final) outing as Bond. Often visibly bored, he seems downright annoyed when he's called upon to deviate from his "realistic" Bond to deliver Roger Moore-styled quips — and utterly disinterested when required to fake the kind of chemistry with his leading ladies that Sean Con-



Lou Lumenick

MOVIE REVIEW

SPECTRE

Quantum of slumber.

Running time: 148 minutes.
Rated PG-13 (sanitized violence and sexuality).

Now playing.

★½

nery managed so effortlessly.

Suspended by the new M (Ralph Fiennes) after this unauthorized Mexican caper, Bond goes off the grid for the umpteenth time on a mission he was given by M's late predecessor (Judi Dench, in a cameo). M, meanwhile, is trying to stop the efforts of his smarmy new boss, C (Andrew Scott), to shut down MI6 and replace the 00 agents with drones. Ironically, "Spectre" does a remarkably poor job of arguing that the whole James Bond concept is not, as one character puts it, "prehistoric."

A big part of the problem is Christoph Waltz as a campy villain from Bond's distant past. A giggling sadist with a white Siamese cat, he doesn't even seem to be acting in the same universe as Craig's Bond, let alone the same movie. And when we finally learn who Waltz's character is taking orders from, that makes even less sense.

As the movie's chief assassin, wrestler Dave Bautista is meant to evoke classic Bond villains like Odd-job and Jaws, but his personality-free

character only suffers from the comparison as Bond emerges without a scratch from attack after attack.

Much has been made of the appearance of Italian sexpot Monica Bellucci as a rare age-appropriate Bond lover. But she has only two very tame scenes as the widow of a Mafia hit man killed by Bond, who picks her up at her husband's funeral.

Craig seems not much more interested in his primary love interest, a former associate's daughter played by Léa Seydoux.

The only actual chemistry in the film is between Bond and Ben Whishaw's peevish Q. Q's not-so-secret longings naturally go unsummated, though at least he has more to do in the spy department than the similarly smitten Money-penny (Naomie Harris).

"Spectre" scenically meanders through Rome, Austria and Tunisia during its frequently mind-numbing 2½ hours. Aside from the occasional explosion or chase sequence, it'll bore the living daylight out of you.

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