

'Daredevil' doesn't fly high

Review by Daniel J. Stasiewski
a&e editor

"Daredevil" owes much of its existence to the success of 2002's highest-grossing film, "Spider-Man." After the web-crawler spun his way to a \$114 million opening weekend, 20th Century Fox upped the budget of its superhero film more than 50 percent, from \$50 million to \$80 million. The extra cash delivered an expanded visual effects budget, as well as the legendary fight choreography Chang-Yan Yuen.

With an additional \$30 million of potential, the "Daredevil" filmmakers decided it would be best to follow the formula that created "Spider-Man." From the opening credit sequence to the visual effects to the music, the film is an aesthetic carbon copy of the blockbuster. If only "Daredevil" had the story and tone to back up the uninspired visuals, maybe the film wouldn't feel so overdone.

After a childhood accident left him blind, Matt Murdoch (Ben Affleck) discovered his remaining senses were heightened to the extreme. His biggest acquisition was radar, allowing him to see objects by the sound they emit. Even after losing his sight, his primary childhood nightmare was the murder of his father at the hands of an unknown assailant. Filled with a terrible resolve, Murdoch became Daredevil.

As a lawyer, Murdoch fights for justice in the courts, but knows real justice can only be achieved by taking down New York's mysterious Kingpin (Michael Clarke Duncan). Murdoch, however, doesn't know the Kingpin is actually the behemoth business tycoon Wilson Fisk.

Fisk isn't worried about his criminal ways until partner Nikolaos Natchios attempts to leave the obviously corrupt company. Without Natchios, the crime trail will lead only to him. Instead of letting Natchios get away clean, Fisk guides the Kingpin investigation right to Natchios and hires an assassin named Bullseye (Colin Farrell) to kill his partner. But Natchios' daughter Elektra (Jennifer Garner) won't let her father's murderer go unpunished.

Elektra, who is in a relationship with Murdoch, goes hunting for the murderer, and Daredevil follows behind protecting her. When Elektra confronts her father's killer, Daredevil is finally able to find the evil Kingpin and the man who killed his father.

The problem isn't that "Daredevil" isn't fun; it's that it's way too much fun. "Daredevil" takes everything that was remotely cool about "Spider-Man" and turns it into two hours of big effects sequences and ferocious fight scenes without churning out much of anything else.

Like "The Fast and the Furious," "Daredevil" puts all it's got into the extreme eye candy but nothing into the actual plot. It's hard to



The man without fear, Daredevil, braves a pair of flaming pool tables.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MOVIEGOD.DE

keep up with the droppings of a story, not because it's complicated, but the rest of the film moves so erratically the story gets left behind.

It should come as no surprise that a film about a blind superhero lacks vision. Director Mark Steven Johnson, in only his sophomore effort, couldn't recognize the difference between Daredevil and Spider-Man, the characters, and foolishly recycled "Spider-Man," the movie. The campy tone that worked in last year's hit didn't fit "Daredevil's" gothic hero.

For example, every time the villain Bullseye comes on screen he's more laughable than terrifying, and not just because Farrell uses his real accent. He's supposed to make "the man without fear" shake in his red-leather boots. Instead, he rides in on his motorcycle like a circus clown. At least Johnson doesn't use "Bad to the Bone" for his theme song.

I'll give credit for casting Duncan as the Kingpin, but that doesn't make up for the waste of his talent. The same can be said for Garner and Farrell (am I missing someone?). Of course this isn't a film concerned with tremendous performances or sharp, insightful dialogue. It's all about people kicking ass and Garner wearing that black leather number. But that doesn't make it a good movie. Nope, not even close.



out of
4 stars

"Daredevil," directed by Mark Steven Johnson, starring Ben Affleck, Jennifer Garner, Michael Clarke Duncan and Colin Farrell is currently showing at Tinseltown.

Spears, Madonna lead the race for worst film performances

by Olivia Page
staff writer

Britney Spears and Madonna are competing to receive the worst actress award from the 23rd annual "Golden Raspberry" awards. The two are not the only ones feuding for the worst actress award. Jennifer Lopez and Winona Ryder also received worst actress nominations, along with Angelina Jolie.

Spears and her film "Crossroads" have a leading eight nominations from the Golden Raspberry awards. Both Spears and the movie are competing for worst actress, worst picture, most flatulent teen targeted movie, worst screen couple, worst director, worst screenplay, worst original song, and is competing with Madonna for the worst movie stinker of 2002.

Madonna has four nominations for the movie "Swept Away" and her cameo in "Die Another Day." "Swept Away" leads with seven nominations. She has a nomination for worst supporting actress in "Die Another Day." Madonna was also nominated for worst supporting actress and worst original song nominations for "Swept Away." Her "Swept Away" co-star Adriano Giannini is competing for worst actor.

Madonna has 15 nominations in the history of the "Razzies." She has already won six awards as worst actress in the movies "Shanghai Surprise," "Who's that Girl," "Madonna: Truth or Dare," "Four Rooms," and "Body of Evidence." She has also received the worst supporting actress award for "The Next Best Thing."

Lopez is a worst actress nominee for movies "Enough" and "Maid In Manhattan." Ryder's "Mr. Deeds" and Jolie's "Life or Something" are also in the running for the worst actress award. Lopez was nominated for two movies last year.

Contenders for the worst actor award include Eddie Murphy, Adam Sandler, Steven Segal, Roberto Benigni, and Giannini.

Murphy's "The Adventures of Pluto Nash" earned five nominations. Murphy's other nominations are "I Spy" and "Showtime." Sandler's "Mr. Deeds" has three nominations along with his other worst actor award for "Eight Crazy Nights." Benigni's version of "Pinocchio" scored six nominations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CINEMA.COM
Britney Spears' "Crossroads" is a Razzie gem.

"What inspired [the award] is I made a mistake by going to a bad movie," said John Wilson, founder of the Raspberry Awards. He wanted his money back but was not refunded.

About the attitude of the Razzies, Wilson said, "It is insulting but it is not meant to be offensive. It's not a slap in the face. It's a banana peel on the floor. It is meant to be funny."

Although not many people actually accept their awards, he said Bill Cosby asked for his award. "Showgirl's" Paul Verhoeven came and accepted his worst director award, as did last year's winner Tom Green.

Don't think that the Razzies is the only group which rates the "bad" movies. E! Entertainment Television features a worst movie sequel list, which includes: "Star Wars: Episode 1—The Phantom Menace," "Batman & Robin," "Speed 2: Cruise Control," "Caddyshack II," "Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2," "Jaws: The Revenge," "Look Who's Talking Too," "Trail of the Pink Panther," "Rocky IV" and "The Color of Money."

The Raspberry Awards will be held and announced March 22, the night before the Oscars in Santa Monica.

"Press love it, the industry doesn't, TV networks don't like it and wish it would go away," said Wilson.

The awards were introduced in 1980. The winners will receive a golf-ball sized raspberry atop a messed up reel of a super 8 film. It is spray painted gold with a street value of not even \$5.

50 Cent's much-hyped debut doesn't add much to hip-hop genre

Review by Malcolm X Abram
Knight Ridder Newspapers
(KRT)

During the first song on rapper 50 Cent's much-hyped full-length debut, "Get Rich Or Die Trying," the listener will learn all he or she needs to know about the 26-year-old, born Curtis Jackson.

He's a thug.

He's made a lot of money selling drugs in his neighborhood.

He has a very special personal relationship with guns.

Women are primarily for passionless humping.

He's not to be trifled with because he will kill you with one of the many, many guns he proudly owns.

He's been shot nine times, including once in the face.

Marijuana is a constant companion.

Alcohol is a frequent companion.

He has no respect for Ja Rule.

Guns are very dangerous, and he'll be glad to show you just how dangerous by mercilessly killing you or someone you love.

Hyped by label owners Eminem (who guests on two tracks) and Dr. Dre as some hybrid of Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G., the Jamaica, Queens, rapper has been making a name for himself on the underground and mix tape circuit for a couple of years with violent image-laden freestyles, the humorous name-dropping "How To Rob" and the Ja Rule diss "Wanksta."

Since 50 Cent's subject matter is straight out of Gangster Rappin' 101, his biggest selling point is his back story. According to his bio, he was born into a drug-dealing "dynasty" run by his mother, who was eventually found murdered in the streets before he hit his teens. The orphan moved in with his grandparents, began selling drugs and eventually found hip-hop.

With all that trauma early in his life, one might hope for some of the perspective and introspection that often turned up in the best work of his idols Tupac and to a lesser degree Biggie, but there is little of that to be found in the disc's 19 tracks. And, despite Eminem's boast on "Patiently Waiting"--"Sprinkle some Big and some Pac and you mix 'em up in a pot, sprinkle (another slain underground favorite) Big L and what have you got? You got the realest and illest killers tied up



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAUNCH.COM
Rapper 50 Cents is nothing new.

in a knot"--50 Cent has neither MC's vivid flair for storytelling nor Big L's talent for searing punch lines.

Consequently, "Get Rich or Die Trying" rides on 50's smooth flow, his knack for catchy, lazily delivered hooks and some sturdy beats provided by Eminem, Dr. Dre, Rockwilder and others.

High points include (another) Ja Rule diss "Back Down," where he manages to make using Rule's given name of Jeffrey sound like an insult. The latest single, the very commercial "In Da Club," is driven by Dre, who seems to have become obsessed with the sound of staccato synthesized orchestra kicks.

On "Poor Lil Rich," 50's syrupy flow and too-seldom-tapped sense of humor are perfectly matched with a circular synth line over a loping, neck-snapping beat. The misogynistic "P.I.M.P." uses contrasting melodies from steel drums and Spanish-style acoustic guitar to take some of the sting out of 50's standard claims of pimpdom.

"Get Rich or Die Trying" debuted in the top spot on The Billboard 200, and it's guaranteed to go multiplatinum quickly. But 50 Cent's hard-earned rise to the top isn't a harbinger of a new voice in hip-hop. It's the sound of the same dead horse being flogged from a few stylish new angles with a diamond-encrusted whip.