

The Bourne Legacy

Jeremy Renner

Directed by Tony Gilroy

★★½

WHEN ARE SOLID ACTION, good actors and only a semi-idiotic spy plot not good enough for summer-movie escapism? When they stand in a long shadow, that's when. And *The Bourne Legacy* is dwarfed by the three smash *Bourne* movies (one from director Doug Liman, two from Paul Greengrass) that preceded it.

The biggest miss is the absence of Matt Damon as amnesiac CIA agent Jason Bourne. Wait a minute. How can you have a *Bourne* movie without Bourne? It's called making sure a profitable series keeps laying golden box-office eggs. So director Tony Gilroy, who participated in writing the other film adaptations of Robert Ludlum's *Bourne* bestsellers, came up with a new character. He's Aaron Cross, an operative who is genetically enhanced in mind and body as long as he takes a blue pill and a green pill at certain intervals. *Hurt Locker* Oscar nominee Jeremy Renner plays this series of ties as if it added up to an actual character. Good on him. But the plot strains to bursting as CIA suit Eric Byer (a snarling Edward Norton) conspires to eliminate Aaron and all traces of the program that produced him. That leaves Aaron at the mercy of Dr. Marta Shearing (Rachel Weisz, slumming gracefully), a genetic scientist who needs to get Aaron to the Philippines for more pills. Don't ask.

Gilroy stages two riveting shootouts involving Marta at work and home. And there's a killer chase scene in Manila as the bad guys try to knock Aaron and Marta off their speeding motorcycle. It's all sound and fury signifying nothing except a desperate need to feed a franchise.

Cosmopolis

Robert Pattinson

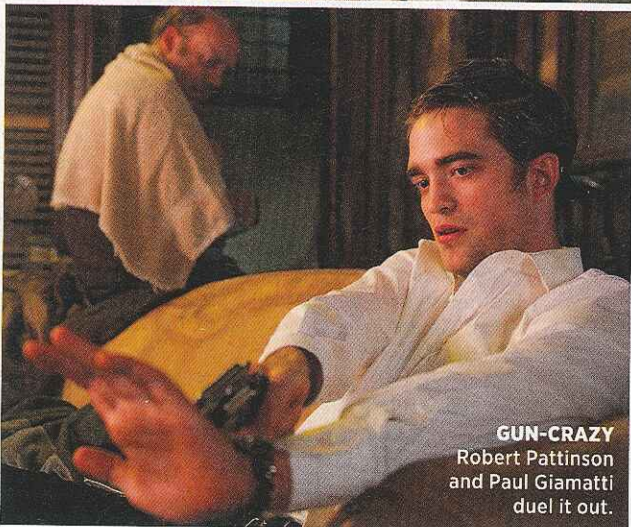
Directed by David Cronenberg

★★★★

IF YOU CAN GET PAST the psychological density of the source materi-



ASSISTED LIVING Frank Langella and robot friend



GUN-CRAZY Robert Pattinson and Paul Giamatti duel it out.

al (Don DeLillo's 2003 novel) and the tabloid noise around the star (RPatz leaves KStew!), this mesmerizing mind-bender ought to prove two things: (1) Robert Pattinson really can act; (2) Director David Cronenberg never runs from a challenge. Pattinson stars as Eric Packer, a master of the universe at 28 but still helpless to stop his financial world from collapsing as he rides around Manhattan in a white stretch limo. Destination: haircut. That's it: one day, one limo. But DeLillo crowded that day with incident. And

Cronenberg, a master recalling his surreal work on *eXistenZ* and *Naked Lunch*, adapts the novel with a poet's eye and a keen ear for language. Eric has hermetically sealed himself inside a limo designed to block out every trace of the outside world. Inside, Eric can ignore the Occupy Wall Street-like protests from the 99 percent, consult with his geek chief (Jay Baruchel) and his money guru (Emily Hampshire), submit to a prostate exam, have

ON THE RUN

Jeremy Renner and Rachel Weisz



sex with his mistress (Juliette Binoche), and get out for disturbing meetings with his wife (Sarah Gadon) and a disgruntled former employee (Paul Giamatti). Working with gifted cinematographer Peter Suschitzky, Cronenberg creates a crumbling world in microcosm. In this fever dream of a movie, Pattinson is incendiary, notably in a climactic gun scene with the great Giamatti. *Cosmopolis*, demanding as it is daring, is no easy ride. I mean that as high praise.

Robot & Frank

Frank Langella

Directed by Jake Schreier

★★★★

LIKE THE BEST MOVIES, THE ones that manage effortlessly to work their way into your head and heart, *Robot & Frank* has a deceptive simplicity. It also helps to have Frank Langella, a stellar actor at his magnificent best, in the starring role. Langella's Frank is a retired burglar, a second-story man ready to hang it up at 70. His children, Hunter (James Marsden) and Madison (Liv Tyler), don't know what to do with him. His parental neglect extended to two prison stints.

Enter Robot (voiced with droll wit by Peter Sarsgaard), a talking machine that will keep the old-timer in line. Or so Frank's kids think. After a few days of Robot's lectures on diet and exercise, Frank gets his own ideas to enlist Robot in a new robbery scheme. There's bracing humor here, and a dash of heartbreak—just don't expect to be wrapped up in a warm and fuzzy cinematic blanket. *Robot & Frank*, crisply directed by newcomer Jake Schreier from a fluid script by Christopher D. Ford, is made of tougher stuff. Just like Frank's flirtation with a librarian (a tangy Susan Sarandon), the movie keeps springing scrappy surprises. It also addresses questions of aging and neglect that

Hollywood likes to run from. Langella, who's played everyone from Dracula to Nixon on-screen, is giving a master class in acting. Enroll now.