

'Spy Game' Falls Short of Hype

By Joe Satre

The movie "Spy Game", directed by Tony Scott, is in dire need of change. If you just wait for the home video version, you will be able to turn this hit-and-miss movie into a sizzling thriller. All you need to do is hit the fast-forward button to about two minutes into every flashback. The problem with this movie is directly attributable to the construction of the screenplay by Michael Frost Beckner and David Arata.

Set in 1991, the film involves CIA agent Nathan Muir (Robert Redford). Muir is only hours away from retirement when word comes that his longtime protégé, Tom Bishop (Brad Pitt), has been captured by the Chinese government while on his latest mission in Beijing, and will be executed in 24 hours.

As the CIA debates whether or not to distance themselves

from Bishop so as to not affect their current trade talks, Muir refuses to allow a man with whom he has had such a memorable past die, and begins planning a rescue.

In between the plotting and negotiations, Nathan relays his checkered relationship with Tom to the CIA heads.

Spy Game is stubbornly reliant on flashbacks that have no bearing or point to the central premise.

Full 15 to 30-minute sections are dedicated to these scenes, set primarily in 1975-'76 during the Vietnam War and 1985-'86 in West Germany, to the point where the director and screenwriters don't know where to stop.

Although these scenes are used to set up the camaraderie that forms between Nathan and Tom, there is never a true sense of friendship, nor are the two developed into anything more than two-dimensional characters at the disposal of the needlessly time-

shifting screenplay.

Additionally, even though the film spans 16 years, Nathan and Tom look the same at all times, never appearing to age in the least, which makes this film even more unbelievable.

Robert Redford

and Brad Pitt, two actors of usually surmountable talent, are not provided the chance to do anything interesting with their roles of Nathan Muir and Tom Bishop. The film asks us to get involved in the fate of Tom, but it never gives us any reason for why we should care about him.

He is not particularly likable or charming, and he is devoid of a

distinct personality.

The same goes for Nathan, who is on hand to do little more than set up each of the flashbacks.

Also making appearances are Catherine McCormack as international aid worker Elizabeth Hadley, who starts a rocky romance with Tom in the West Germany flashback, and Marianne Jean-Baptiste, who is sin-

gle-handedly the best thing about the film as Nathan's trusting secretary, Gladys.

Jean-Baptiste steals scenes from Redford, quite a notable feat in itself, and also provides the sort of passion and depth, in a small role, that both Pitt and Redford themselves are curiously lacking.

With lightning-speed editing, the director of this film hopes

to fool the viewer into thinking that something suspenseful is occurring when there never actually is.

The film is desperate in its aim to supply divertive entertainment when, in actuality, it is a crushing bore that lacks even a hint of enjoyment.

Towards the end of the film, the script beings to run out of gas until it gets to the CIA task force's final comeuppance by Muir as he completely outwits everyone.

After Muir's last brilliant stroke, he can't think of anything better to say than a clichéd, "Do you remember when we could tell the good guys from the bad?"

At a time when it is clear that our country desperately needs a much larger and aggressive spy agency, Spy Game seems awkwardly dated.

In the end, Spy Game is a surprising waste of time that leaves you feeling cheated, unsatisfied, and mind-boggled as to what exactly the point of it all was.

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-Joe Satre

Create Christmas Presents Absolutely Free: Random Things You May Never Need To Know

By Jocelyn Redemann

It's that time of year again, the time of year when poor college students with a very meager cash flow are challenged with the

task of finding Christmas presents for family and friends. Well... have I got wonderful news for you! Below are a ideas for Christmas presents that are absolutely free - you can make

them all out of things found in the average dorm room!

With a little bit of scrounging and imagination, you'll create a gift anyone would be sure to love!

El Puppet-o

How many of you remember those sock puppets from when you were a kid? Yeah, me neither, but I hear they were a hit so... here's your opportunity to bring them back into style.

Grab a dirty sock off the floor and put it on your hand... like a puppet.

Dig into the crevices of your chair, sofa, futon, etc. for spare change.

Glue any two pieces of change on for eyes.

Draw lips with a red marker, you (or your girlfriend's) lipstick, or dip into a glass of red kool-aid to make a mouth.

If you're really ambitious, scrape the hair out of the shower drain and attach it to the sock

with an old, yet still moist, piece of chewing gum.

Whalla! You have just created your very own "El Puppet-o" - a must have for everyone this Christmas!

Blossom Bunch

I don't know if you've ever bought fresh flowers, but man, they're expensive so... here's a way to make some for free!

Dig out some scrap paper (colors are nice) from your garbage, under your desk, or whatever drawer or folder it has accumulated.

Find a scissors and some writing utensils you don't care too much about giving up.

Cut out various shapes from the paper no bigger than 4 square inches.

Remember, you're making flowers here; think pretty.

Lightly fold the shapes in half and cut a small slit in the middle, just big enough to fit around the writing utensil,

but not too big that it will slip off.

Color coordinate the shapes in groups of 3 or 4 so they are aesthetically pleasing.

Place a grouping of flowers on a writing utensil and bend the "petals" slightly upward.

If you cut the slit too large, use a small amount of scotch tape to attach the "petals" to the "stem."

To assemble a bouquet, gather three to four blossoms and tie with a shoelace.

Go ahead - make someone you love a Blossom Bunch this Christmas!



(above) El-Puppet-o and Blossom Bunch perfect gifts for those short on cash
Photo By Jonna Stark

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