Escaping 007: Is Daniel Craig terminating Bond?

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Empires collapse, stock markets crash, dynasties die. Yet on one thing you can rely: the wheels of the James Bond franchise keep turning, said Stephen Dalton in The Hollywood Reporter. That was proved beyond a doubt with 2012’s Skyfall, the 23rd film in the series, which became the highest-grossing British movie of all time. No surprise, then, to find that the follow-up, Spectre, boasts the same leading man (Daniel Craig), same director (Sam Mendes), and same writing team. But has all “the breathless anticipation” for it been warranted? I’m glad to say, the writing team. But has all “the director (Sam Mendes), and same leading man (Daniel Craig), same Spectre, boasted the same follow-up, surprise, then, to find that the British movie of all time. No which became the highest-grossing Skyfall, the 23rd film in the series, proved beyond a doubt with 2012’s Hollywood Reporter. That was said Stephen Dalton in The James Bond franchise keep turning, thing you can rely: the wheels of the Spectre, captives a bit from each film. “It features the most iconic line (‘A martini. Shaken, not stirred’) and a wide range of gadgets that would become the series’ trademark”, said RottenTomatoes.com.

Yet Craig recently said that he’d rather “slash his wrists” than play the secret agent again. Paradoxically, that sense of boredom, which filters through in his performance, “makes for a better Bond”, said David ‘For a better Bond’, said David for Bond, taking over from Pierce Brosnan – “many questioned whether the blond-haired, blue-eyed, gym-sculpted Craig was the right man for the job”, said Inquirer.net. Even director Sam Mendes was initially sceptical before working with Craig on Skyfall. “I thought Bond had become the opposite of what Daniel is – a slightly disengaged, urbane, jokey, eyebrow-raising, you know, a pastiche in a way,” he told the BBC. “But the intensity Craig has brought to the part has allowed the multi-million dollar franchise to be rebooted with a harder, more serious edge and won round many of the sceptics.” In an interview with Time in 2012, legendary ex-Bond Roger Moore even went on to describe Craig as the best Bond yet. “He’s quite brilliant. I wrote to Barbara [Broccoli] and Michael [Wilson] and said…they’ve guaranteed Bond another 50 years of life.”

And Craig is feeling it too, said Time. In a recent interview he appeared tired with playing 007: “I’m not James Bond,” Craig said. “I’m not particularly brave, I’m not particularly cool-headed.” Adding, “the day I can walk into a pub and someone goes, ‘Oh, there’s Daniel Craig’ and then just leaves me alone, that’ll be great”. When he was first named as the new Bond in 2005 – taking over from Pierce Brosnan – “many questioned whether the blond-haired, blue-eyed, gym-sculpted Craig was the right man for the job”, said Inquirer.net. Even director Sam Mendes was initially sceptical before working with Craig on Skyfall. “I thought Bond had become the opposite of what Daniel is – a slightly disengaged, urbane, jokey, eyebrow-raising, you know, a pastiche in a way,” he told the BBC. “But the intensity Craig has brought to the part has allowed the multi-million dollar franchise to be rebooted with a harder, more serious edge and won round many of the sceptics.” In an interview with Time in 2012, legendary ex-Bond Roger Moore even went on to describe Craig as the best Bond yet. “He’s quite brilliant. I wrote to Barbara [Broccoli] and Michael [Wilson] and said…they’ve guaranteed Bond another 50 years of life.”

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Let’s clear the stage for Spectre. First off, how about that title? It’s a direct reference to the Spectre (more on this later), the ancient entity that’s haunting the Bond universe from the very beginning. And it’s a nod to the fact that this is the 24th film in the series, 50 years after the first that marked James Bond’s debut on screen. The action kicks off with Bond and his team (including MI5 agent Madeleine Swann, played by Léa Seydoux) in Mexico City, where they’re trying to track down the notorious villain Mauricio de la Roca (played by Benicio Del Toro). But things go sour when de la Roca escapes and the team is left with a trail of destruction. Enter the Spectre, an ancient order from the Bible that’s been waiting for Bond in the afterlife. It’s a formidable force, and it’s clear that the franchise is ready to take its place as one of the greats of the genre.

And now for the acting. Daniel Craig is as good as ever, bringing his usual blend of toughness and charm to the role. He’s flanked by a stellar cast, including Christoph Waltz as Franz Oberhauser (a role that he plays with gusto) and Ralph Fiennes as M. (The Daily Telegraph. The words tell us that we are witnessing Mexico City’s deliciously morbid Day of the Dead festival; and they are also a reminder that “raiding its own mausoleum” has always been the franchise’s forte. Cue the regulation dressing-down liniers, beautiful women, great gadgets, dazzling stunts and witty one-liners, Spectre is a “joyride” of a film.

The dead are alive. Those four words flash up onscreen to launch a breathtaking pre-credits sequence in which 007, clad in a skeleton costume, almostbotches an assassination, said Robbie Collin in The Daily Telegraph. The words tell us that we are witnessing Mexico City’s deliciously morbid Day of the Dead festival; and they are also a reminder that “raiding its own mausoleum” has always been the franchise’s forte. Cue the regulation dressing-down liniers, beautiful women, great gadgets, dazzling stunts and witty one-liners, Spectre is a “joyride” of a film.

Top five James Bond DVD/Blue-Rays

1. **The Man with the Golden Gun (1974)**
   - Although this film sometimes “falls rather flat”, it preludes the work of Timothy Dalton and Daniel Craig. To understand the darkness in the modern Bond films, you’ve got to see this Roger Moore classic, said Michael Hann in The Guardian.

2. **Skyfall (2012)**
   - Daniel Craig “remains Bond incarnate”, in one of the best 007 films yet, said Robin Collin in The Telegraph. The great Sam Mendes is also joined by his nine times Oscar-nominated cinematographer Roger Deakins to make “beautiful sequences”, from Istanbul to Shanghai.

3. **Goldfinger (1964)**
   - Goldfinger is the film where James Bond as we know his comes into focus. “It features his most iconic line (‘A martini. Shaken, not stirred’) and a wide range of gadgets that would become the series’ trademark”, said RottenTomatoes.com.

4. **Dr. No (1962)**
   - “Of course, it’s dated – a Sunbeam Alpine isn’t exactly cutting-edge elegant playboy spy born to play the part. Perhaps by design, he captures a bit from each predecessor – the panache of Sean Connery, the cheeky humour of Roger Moore, the serious grit of Timothy Dalton,” said Doug Thomas in Seattle Times.

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