

‘Angel Has Fallen’ is an unnecessary sequel

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: «« out of «««««

Running Time: 121 minutes

I'm not sure that anyone was pining for a sequel to the action pictures *Olympus Has Fallen* and *London Has Fallen*, but audiences are getting a third one. This reviewer was especially uncomfortable with another follow-up, especially considering how much I detested the previous entry for being mean-spirited and possessing a xenophobic streak. Thankfully, *Angel Has Fallen* is an improvement over the prior chapter. Yet, while it fulfills its duties as a serviceable action flick, the story presented is still pretty dopey and there is nothing especially memorable about it.

The events of the previous film have left Secret Service Agent Mike Banning (Gerard Butler) woozy and hiding the after effects of numerous concussions from his employers and the president (Morgan Freeman). After receiving a visit from old friend and private military contractor Wade Jennings (Danny Huston) the two share their concerns about the future. Not long after, an elaborate assassination attempt is made on the president, leaving him in a coma. When Banning awakens, he learns that FBI agent Helen Thompson (Jada Pinkett Smith) has found evidence setting him up for the crime. Banning manages to break free from his bonds and sets out to prove his innocence, doing his best to avoid both government agents and assassins.

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One element that is an improvement is the battered and bruised state of Banning. He's clearly not at his best physically in this installment and having the lead in a weakened state and on the run adds a little more drama to the proceedings. It also makes the hero more sympathetic than in the previous chapter. Unfortunately, when he's faced with countless threats up close and personal, he still manages to beat the stuffing out of them with little resistance. An appearance by Nick Nolte as Banning's estranged father in the second half of the picture also adds some levity as the recluse detonates a ridiculous number of explosives on his property.

As for the physical conflicts, the stunts and fight moves are well presented and pieced together. Sadly, the photography has a muted and washed-out appearance. While the persistent dull blue-tinge may help communicate the emotional state of the hero and the grimness of the situation, it isn't particularly interesting to look at. In fact, as action scene after action scene unfolds and the body count rises to sillier and sillier heights, it all begins to blur together.

The story logic also leaves something to be desired. Many speeches are corny, the villains certainly lack any subtlety and it becomes increasingly absurd that the FBI can't figure out the identities of the bad guys. It all ends in another series of explosions and even a collapsing building. While entertaining to watch on a certain level, there aren't a lot of thrills involved. It's all clearly preposterous and the final shootout between the hero and antagonist on a rooftop (which involves two men firing automatic weapons at each other at close range) looks almost comical.

Personally, I am relieved that some of the uglier elements of the last installment have been cast away. It's impossible to take this effort seriously for even a second. However, little of what is displayed is exciting or in any way memorable. *Angel Has Fallen* serves its purpose for action film fans needing a quick fix but isn't really necessary and won't linger in the mind more than a minute or two after leaving the theater.

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