



STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

Director: F. Gary Gray
Writer: Jonathan Herman, Andrea Berloff
Stars: O'Shea Jackson Jr., Corey Hawkins, Jason Mitchell
Strengths: Story, Acting, Environment
Weakness: Not an exact representation of their history
Runtime: 147 minutes
Rating: 3.5/5

PLOT: The group N.W.A emerges from the mean streets of Compton in Los Angeles, California, in the mid-1980s and revolutionizes Hip Hop culture with their music and tales about life in the hood.

REVIEW: Straight Outta Compton is an explosively entertaining hip-hop biopic that raps home truths about race and police brutality as timely now as they were during the 1980s in Compton, California. That's where five black teens — known as Dr. Dre, Ice Cube, Eazy-E, DJ Yella and MC Ren — channelled their fury into the beats of N.W.A, short for Niggaz With Attitude. The band didn't invent gangsta rap, but N.W.A were surely the delivery room, sparked by near-constant rousting from the LAPD. Director F. Gary Gray, working from a script by Jonathan Herman and

Andrea Berloff, doesn't supply halos for his protagonists. Sex, drugs and the thug life figure prominently. The atmosphere is charged as cinematographer Matthew Libatique creates striking visuals that pull us into the fray. Cube's look-alike son, O'Shea Jackson Jr., does a smashing job playing his dad, blending sensitivity with seething intensity. It's Cube and his buddy DJ Andre "Dr. Dre" Young (a charmingly sly Corey Hawkins) who persuade drug dealer Eric "Eazy-E" Wright (Jason Mitchell) to finance a label, Ruthless Records. Mitchell's fierce portrayal of the

mercurial Eazy (who died of AIDS complications in 1995) is award-calibre, especially when he haltingly, then thrillingly, lays down vocals on "Boyz-n-the-Hood." Straight Outta Compton plays better when it's outside the box, showing us N.W.A power and the consequences of abusing it. Maybe the movie would have been better if it didn't sidestep the band's misogyny, and malicious infighting. Regardless, this film stands as an amazing, electrifying piece of hip-hop history.

Reviewed by *Intisab Shabriyar*

CLASSIC REVIEW

THE TURNING POINT (1945)

Director: Fridrikh Ermler.
Writers: Boris Chirskov.
Stars: Mikhail Derzhavin, Pyotr Andriyevsky, Yuri Tolubeyev.
Runtime: 108 minutes

PLOT: An absorbing account of the Battle of Stalingrad and the trying circumstances in which the soldiers fought, setting stage for the battle with the highest bloodshed in the history of warfare.

REVIEW: The film tells about the fates of those who participated in the Stalingrad battle in 1942, which became a large break in the Eastern theatre of World War II and also the largest and bloodiest battle in the history of warfare. In the course of five months the city resisted Fascist offensive. To return Stalingrad to the enemy meant losing the war, but also to hold city it seemed almost impossible as the casualties reach unimaginable heights.

The story is an exhilarating and ardent tale about the struggles of the Russian army to hold on to Stalingrad while the German offensive rained down with all they had

to cripple Stalin's stronghold. A critical depiction of the struggles of war, it is a harrowing portrayal of the lives of soldiers away from home, fighting under command in ruthless conditions of the cold Russian front, unsure of how the encounters will be benefitting either side. The panoramic views of the landscapes and the dark, melan-



choly sequences of the dialogues as Ermler's signature are wonderfully executed and almost complete the expressions and performances of the actors. It is a wonderful film to watch for classic movie enthusiasts, and war movie fans will find it a particularly unique experience.

Reviewed by *Mobaiminul Islam*

ALL IS WELL

Director: Umesh Shukla
Writers: Umesh Shukla, Sumit Arora
Stars: Rishi Kapoor, Abhishek Bachchan, Asin
Strength: Acting, Enjoyable First Half
Weakness: Long Runtime, Subpar Story
Runtime: 156 minutes
Rating: 1.5/5

PLOT: A musician finds himself on the run from a group of thugs with his friend and his estranged parents.

REVIEW: The protagonist of All Is Well is the perennially grouchy Inder Bhalla, a Himachal Pradesh baker's son who has had a choppy childhood and trusts nobody and nothing in this world. He has lived in Thailand for a decade to pursue a career in the music industry but has yet to find his big break. Inder flies back to his hometown Kasol at the behest of Cheema (Zeeshan Mohammad Ayyub), a bumbling thug, to sort out a tangle related to the failed bakery run by his father, Bhajanlal Bhalla (Rishi Kapoor). On the same flight is Nimmi (Asin), who is madly in love with the commitment-phobic Inder but is headed back home to get hitched to another man. Back in Kasol, Bhalla owes the goon lakhs of rupees. The latter wants to grab the bakery but Bhalla will have none of it. A wild goose chase ensues across Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, with the Bhallas and Nimmi in a red convertible and Cheema and his henchmen in a police vehicle.

The rest of the film, the more sluggish stretches included, is passably watchable. Director Umesh Shukla switches frequently from breezy slapstick comedy to intense family drama and does so relatively smoothly until about the last quarter of the two-hour film. The climax of All Is Well is both overly contrived and cringingly preachy. In short, this is a terrible movie and can only be recommended if one has absolutely nothing else to do with their time.

Reviewed by *Intisab Shabriyar*

