

# Inside Our Films: *Jack Reacher* (2012)

By Jim Bryson

Every once in a while I see a movie that really sticks with me. This is not to say that these movies are particularly good examples of great films but instead that they have something about them that really stays with you. *Jack Reacher* (2012) is a particularly good example of this.

There are a great many things to praise about this film but what I would like to point out is the iconic opening scenes.

The film tells the story of the title character who is a former military police officer of some distinction who arrives in the story to settle an old score after a tragic mass shooting.

As you could guess the story is all about the character of Jack Reacher, played by Tom Cruise. This character is equal parts hero, villain, patriot, and drifter. Now that his official military career has ended he is drifting around the country, "enjoying the freedom" that he spent so much time fighting for.

The movie is based on the books by British writer Lee Childs (Jim Grant). Although I have not read any of these books I have understood that the situation that is laid out in this film is very much an everyday occurrence for our title character. Jack Reacher knows what is right and is very

much willing to do what is necessary to make things correct. In this way he is very much a reflection of Clint Eastwood's *Dirty Harry* (1971) who was also willing to "do what it takes."



The things that stand out about this film are the opening sniper/mass shooting scene and also the untethered willingness of the main character to use violence and his clever intellect to solve the story's pressing issues. Also the film is marked by excellent performances from both Jai Courtney and Rosamund Pike, although the performance of Alexia Fast leaves quite a bit to be desired.

As an added bonus we see an unusual screen appearance from Werner Herzog, the acclaimed director. Personally, Herzog is one of my favorite, all time great directors and found his role in this film exciting and satisfying.

While Cruise delivers a solid performance and, as always, performs his own stunts, I found the supporting cast to be the heart of this film. The character of Jack Reacher is the tip of a righteous spear and doesn't make the same personal connection that the other characters of this story do.

*Jack Reacher* (2012) is very much worthy of watching and rewatching. You can imagine my excitement when I saw the sequel *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back* (2016) arrive in the library. In all the ways that *Jack Reacher* is good the sequel fails to match up. In every viewing of this film I have been struck with the notion that the film makers had missed the reasons that made the first film iconic and instead were trying to make a quick buck on the energy of the first and is the same classic Hollywood mistake that we have seen over and over.

You can find *Jack Reacher* (2012) and its sequel, *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back* (2016) and many other wonderful films at your local Vernonia library.



Silas Hunter shows off one of the three large mouth bass he caught at Vernonia Lake while fishing with his grandpa, Michael Buessler, who was visiting from Whitefish, Montana.



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