

# The furious fated for greatness

BY IAN VAN ORDEN

Universal Pictures

The opening scene of "The Fate of the Furious" sets the tone for the rest of the movie. "Fate" finds Dominic 'Dom' Toretto (Vin Diesel) and Letty Ortiz (Michelle Rodriguez) on their honeymoon in Havana, Cuba, and it isn't long before Dom is forced into a street race to defend his cousin from a loan shark.

Instead of using his own vehicle, though, he races with his cousin's, "the slowest car on the island," while his opponent drives his own, "the fastest on the island." Dom modifies the vehicle, ending in the engine catching fire halfway through the race. He nonetheless wins, of course, but not before launching his car into the ocean where it explodes.

***"Fate" ups the stakes higher than they've ever been while continuing to explore the themes that have dominated the franchise since the beginning, family being chief among them.***

Since the release of the first movie in 2001, "The Fast and the Furious" franchise has gone through several evolutions. Beginning as a street racing franchise, the first three movies focused heavily on this culture, with the overarching plot revolving around fast cars and the racers driving them. There were always additional elements, such as the truck heists featured in the first movie, but the focus was clear.

With the release of "Fast and Furious," in 2009, the franchise saw the return of Paul Walker and Vin Diesel, and with them the series shifted away from its street racing origins, instead becoming more of a detective story. "Fast Five" and "Fast & Furious 6" saw yet another shift in favor of explosions and destruction. "The Fate of the Furious," released April 14, continues this trend.

"Fate" ups the stakes higher than

they've ever been while continuing to explore the themes that have dominated the franchise since the beginning, family being chief among them. This is a theme that's existed within the franchise from the beginning, and it becomes especially important to Fate's plot. The methods used to explore the idea are not subtle, the number of times the word "family" is spoken in the movie illustrates this well enough, but for a movie built on throwing the concept of subtlety out the window, it seems to work.

The rest of the dialogue follows a similar vein, much of which is made up of one liners and generic action hero phrases. This is not a Coen Brothers film and if you walk into the theater expecting Shakespearean writing, you will be disappointed. There are several moments in the movie, specifically delivered by Vin Diesel and Dwayne Johnson, where the dialogue feels clunky and forced, but for the most part, the straightforwardness works. The chemistry between Johnson's character Luke Hobbs and Deckard Shaw, portrayed by Jason Statham, works especially well as the two actors seem to play off each other to exceptional results, though the inclusion of Statham's character in the movie does seem forced. Other characters, such as Tyrese Gibson's Roman Pearce and Chris 'Ludacris' Bridges' Tej Parker maintain the status quo.

"Fate" also sees the introduction of a new villain in Cipher, a cyberterrorist who orchestrates the events of the movie. Portrayed by Charlize Theron, Cipher is menacing enough to carry the plot, and Theron generally manages to pull off the sometimes-clumsy dialogue handed to her.

"The Fate of the Furious" doesn't try and do anything new. It is a very similar movie to its predecessor, "Furious 7," though Paul Walker's absence is definitely noticeable. Overall, fans of the last few movies will most likely enjoy this entry in the franchise as well. Anyone looking for a return to the franchise's roots or a more complex story are sure to be disappointed. This trend is likely to continue, as the film now holds the record for biggest worldwide opening in cinematic history. Two sequels are already planned, the first set to be released on April 19, 2019.



"The Fate of the Furious" opened April 14 to the biggest opening weeked in cinematic history, grossing \$532 million worldwide, a record previously held by "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

