

## Bad Boys for Life

Action thriller brings another round of battles

by Dwight Brown

They first teamed up for *Bad Boys* in 1995, to great box office success. There was an encore in 2003, *Bad Boys II*, which was distinguished by incredible stunts. Now, Will Smith and Martin Lawrence go back to the same well one more time. Is there any water left?

Two new young directors guided the series into the 2020s. Moroccan-born Belgian filmmakers Adil El Arbi and Bilal Fallah (*Black, Gangsta*) put their own spin on the footage aided by cinematographer Robrecht Heyvaert (*Black, Gangsta*). What's on view looks like an ultra-hip extended music video that captures your eyeballs and takes them hostage.

A sporty looking, deep blue 992-Generation Porsche speeds through the streets of sunny Miami. If a reckless twentysomething was behind the wheel, you'd call the car a chick magnet. Instead it's 51-year-old

Detective Mike Lowrey (Smith) steering the vehicle with his lead foot on the accelerator. In his hands the sports car is more a middle-ager's last grasp at youth. Lowrey's 54-year-old partner Detective Marcus Burnett (Lawrence) sits petrified in the passenger seat, holding on for dear life and nauseated by the hyper-dangerous ride.

Burnett: "I'm about to throw up." Lowrey: "You better not. That's hand-stitched Italian leather. You better drink that s—t!" And so, it begins. Edge of your seat action scenes, perfectly shot. Thrills and chills. Two old friends: One, a swinger, clearly still in the game. The other, a family man a whisper away from retirement with an accountant's nervous stomach and no love left for a cop's perilous life.

Subtly and brazenly, in humor and family drama, the script rips into the ages of the two protagonists like someone pouring salt on an open wound. The "boys" have lost a few steps and added gray hairs that industrial strength Grecian Formula can't fix. And the contrasts between the veterans and the new justice league gets played for laughs persistently.

But strong is the chemistry between the



PHOTO COURTESY SONY PICTURES

*The Bad Boys* Mike Lowrey (Will Smith) and Marcus Burnett (Martin Lawrence) are back together for another ride in the highly anticipated *Bad Boys for Life*.

two leads. Twenty-five years later, their bromance is as fresh as the day they met. Smith, as the mercurial, perpetual bachelor exhibits his best swagger in years. His Mike is like an old club goer who hasn't realized the crowd around him is young enough to be his children. Lawrence's curmudgeon and sensitive character plays perfectly against Smith's brash attitude. He's

hysterical in ways only true comedians can be. The characters' bond is easy to like and has been cherished by filmgoers who will likely follow them into old age even as these bad boys start to solve crimes in nursing homes.

*Dwight Brown is a film critic for the National Newspapers Publishers Association, the Black Press USA.*

### ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

**Hedwig and the Angry Inch** – Portland Center Stage at The Armory is kicking off the New Year with "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," starring Portland's Delphon "DJ" Curtis Jr. as Hedwig and Ithica Tell as Yitzhak. Part rock concert, part cabaret, part stand-up comedy routine, show plays through Feb. 23 in the Ellyn Bye Studio at The Armory. For tickets, visit pcs.org, by phone at 503-445-3700 or in-person from the box office.

**Fix-It-Fair** – Learn simple ways to save money and be healthy with all-day exhibits, workshops, health tests, financial consulting, a free lunch and more when the city of Portland and other governmental agencies sponsor a free community Fix It Fair, Saturday, Jan. 25 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Ockley Green Middle School, 6031 N. Montana and Ainsworth St.

**Chinese New Year** – Lan Su Chinese Garden, downtown, celebrates Chinese New Year — the most colorful, sensational and joyous of all Chinese festivals. The celebration roars with lion dances, glows with lanterns and entertains with cultural activities, dances and demonstrations from Sunday, Jan. 25 through Feb. 9. A Chinese New Year parade begins at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 25 at 315 N.W. Davis and concludes with a performance at the Oregon Historical Society.

**Everybody Reads** – Multnomah County Library invites the community to participate in Everybody Reads 2020, featuring Tommy Orange's debut novel about the urban Native experience, "There There." Free copies are available at library locations or download the e-book or audiobook from the library catalog.

**Black Experience on Canvas** – Portland artist Arvie Smith, a renowned painter of the black experience, will showcase some of his new work in a solo exhibit '2 Up and 2 Back,' now showing through Feb. 2 at the Disjecta Contemporary Arts Center, 8371 N. Interstate Ave.

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Three new apartment buildings offering affordable rental housing are opening throughout North/Northeast Portland in 2020. Those interested in one of these new affordable housing opportunities must apply through the North/Northeast Preference Policy application between Jan 6th – Feb 21st.

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