

FILM REVIEW:
Depp Delivers in ‘Black Mass’



Johnny Depp plays infamous mobster Whitey Bulger in ‘Black Mass’

By Kam Williams
Special to *The Skanner News*

In the mid-1970s, James “Whitey” Bulger began rising through the ranks of South Boston’s Winter Hill Gang by knocking off all the competition vying for control of his tight-knit, Irish neighborhood. The power-hungry mobster subsequently sought to muscle-in on assorted illegal rackets being run by the Mafia in the city’s predominantly-Italian North End.

While in the midst of the ensuing turf war, Whitey was surreptitiously approached by John Connolly (Joel Edgerton), a childhood friend from Southie working for the FBI. Agent Connolly informed his pal that the Bureau had enough evidence to put him behind bars and throw away the key, though it was willing to look the other way in return for his cooperation as an undercover informant.

Bulger grudgingly agreed after establishing that he wouldn’t have to snitch on any of his associates, only on his cross-town rivals in the Angiulo crime family.

However, Connolly further stipulated that no murders could be committed by any Winter Hill members once the unholy alliance was struck.

Of course, that was a little much to expect, given how there’s no honor among thieves, especially when it comes to a ruthless assassin like Whitey.

He merely saw the protection being afforded by the Feds as an opportunity to behave with impunity as he further expanded his spheres of influence.

The Machiavellian mastermind proceeded to embark on a bloody reign of terror during which Connolly and a fellow G-Man (David Harbour) found themselves being manipulated to venture to the wrong side of the law. When the truth finally came to light, the two agents were arrested as accomplices to Whitey who disappeared into thin air, landed on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list, and yet still avoided apprehension for well over a decade.

Directed by Scott Cooper (*Crazy Heart*), *Black Mass* is a riveting biopic chronicling the infamous exploits

of as chilling a character as you’re apt to encounter in the theater this year. Johnny Depp is at the top of his game, here, as Bulger, a very intimidating, larger-than-life monster without a functioning conscience. Cooper has the potential of doing for the three-time, Academy Award-nominee what he already accomplished for Jeff Bridges with *Crazy Heart*, namely, land the veteran thespian the coveted Oscar which has managed to elude him despite a brilliant career marked by a string of nonpareil performances.

Besides Depp, kudos are in order for much of the stellar supporting cast, especially Joel Edgerton, Kevin Bacon, Peter Sarsgaard, Dakota Johnson, Julianne Nicholson and Benedict Cumberbatch. Though the September back-to-school season is generally a harbinger of a weak slate at the cinema, the exceptional *Black Mass* proved to be a pleasant surprise and the first must-see flick of the fall.

Excellent ★★★★★

Rated R for graphic violence, pervasive profanity, sexual references and brief drug use

Running time: 122 minutes

Distributor: Warner Brothers Pictures

Kanye West shows collection at New York Fashion Week

NEW YORK (AP) — Kanye West’s presentation during New York Fashion Week showed off his baggy, rural collection in a military style as Anna Wintour, Lorde and Kim Kardashian — holding baby North West — sat in the front row.

West debuted Yeezy Season 2 on Wednesday at the Skylight Modern. The collection was launched in four sets: First a woman entered the stage wearing tan, almost the same color as her skin, and she yelled, “First row, fall in. Second row, fall in.” Others models followed, sporting the same color and blond ponytails.

The clothes ranged from loose jackets to high-waisted pants to tank tops. The leader wore a hoodie. Kim Kardashian and North West matched the models with their own tan ensembles.

The next set, which also featured a model yelling orders, featured army green, followed by deeper brown and then black. Most of the pants on the men were loose. There were tighter items on the women, including leggings and bathing suits. And some of the models wore baseball caps that covered their eyes.

Kourtney and Khloe Kardashian, Courtney Love, Common, Michael Strahan, Seth Meyers and former Vogue editor-at-large Andre Leon Talley watched from the front row while Jaden Smith, R&B singer Miguel and rapper Pusha T watched from the second row.

All the models entered during the finale as a song blasted in the background. One of the models even started smoking.

West appeared, earning loud applause as he walked in between four rows of models.

Earlier this year, West debuted his Yeezy Boost shoe line for Adidas during Fashion Week where Beyonce, Jay Z, Rihanna and Diddy sat in the front show. At that show, North West made headlines when she cried, but the 2-year-old was chilled out for most of West’s presentation Wednesday: As she sat on her mother’s lap, she said “Mommy” a few times and ate a lollipop. She sat on the floor for some of the show, then moved to the lap of her aunt Kourtney.

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Usher, Laverne Cox added to Global Citizen Festival in NYC

NEW YORK (AP) — Usher, Laverne Cox and Katie Holmes have been added to this month’s Global Citizen Festival starring Beyonce and Pearl Jam in New York City.

Connie Britton, Freida Pinto, Gayle King and Sophia Bush have also been added to the host committee for the Sept. 26 event. Previously announced hosts include Stephen Colbert, Kerry Washington, Salma Hayek Pinault, Olivia Wilde, Hugh Jackman and his actress-wife, Deborra-Lee Furness.

Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, Common, Tori Kelly and Indian singer Sunidhi Chauhan will perform on the Great Lawn in Central Park



for the multi-hour event. It will air on MSN-BC and stream on iHeartRadio and Tidal.

The concert is timed to coincide with the U.N. General Assembly meeting.