

Mission Not Accomplished in New 'Bourne' Installment

The fourth installment in the Bourne series, *The Bourne Legacy* features a new hero, Aaron Cross (Jeremy Renner). "There was never just one," the tagline teases.

The film opens with Cross on a journey in Alaska, where he continually finds himself being hunted by wolves. His heroing stunts, as he survives in the wilderness, are intercut with scenes of upper-level governmental bureaucrats in a panic about Jason Bourne.

Bourne, the focus of the first three films in the franchise, is on the loose in New York (though we only see him through images on newscasts), and it's got retired Col. Eric Byer (Edward Norton), sweating. Although the program Bourne was part of is shut down, there are others that stemmed from it—including the one Cross is part of, Outcome.

In true fashion of the previous *Bourne* films, the movie cuts to scenes around the globe, including Chicago, Washington, D.C, Seoul and Karachi as we watch Outcome agents mysteriously die off.

Although Byer's goal is not necessarily clear at first, it finally sinks in when his team tries to gun down Cross with a drone plane. The spy of course foils them, and they leave him for dead.

Meanwhile, a CIA scientist goes mental and shoots up a lab, killing every doctor who worked on the project—except for Dr. Marta Shearing (Rachel Weisz). The deranged scientist shoots five doctors at point-blank range as they all run and beg for their lives before turning the gun on himself.

Later, Shearing is visited by two governmental agents at her

fixer-upper mansion. They appear to be concerned about her mental state, and right after she confesses that she believes the shooter was operating in an altered mental state, they overtake her and try to make her murder look like a suicide.

Enter Cross, in what is really the first action scene of the film. In a disturbing chain of events, he murders all four agents in the house and then pours gasoline and sets it on fire. He and Shearing escape before the CIA knows what happened.

Shearing, who is just as confused as the audience, questions Cross on why he saved her and how he knew about her. After vaguely mentioning “greens and blues” previously, he explains that he is out of his meds and desperately needs more. We have seen him and other agents pop these green and blue pills, but they’ve remained a mystery.

It is not until this point that the plot becomes completely clear. The pills Cross has been taking enhance his abilities—mental and physical—and without them he will deteriorate, and possibly even die. Shearing says the only solution is to inject him with a virus so he no longer needs the pills. The only problem? They’re kept in a lab in the Philippines.

So the pair sets out to fly to Manila. The CIA finally discovers that Shearing is alive and has a partner, but it takes them some time to figure out who her accomplice is. By the time Byer and his team have discovered that Shearing and Cross (who is surprisingly not dead) are on their way to the Philippines and why, the scientist and super-spy have already made it into the lab.

It is here where the PG-13 *Legacy*, which so far has lacked the action the Bourne trilogy is known for, picks up. Byer employs an agent (Louis Ozawa Changchien) from a new program called LARX to hunt down Shearing and Cross. The spy has no lines in

the film, and is seemingly introduced merely so we can watch a rooftop pursuit and motorcycle chase.

Although the action scenes leave you on the edge of your seat and the actors are believable, this movie leaves more to be desired. Not only is its plot confusing, but the characters clearly lack any sort of morals. Cross seems minorly conflicted, but pushes past it as he kills bad guys left and right. Byer's ruthlessness in taking care of business is unsettling. In a flashback scene, we see him tell Cross they are "sin eaters—morally indefensible and absolutely necessary." But it is clear he and his whole team don't really care about committing sins.

In addition to the violence, Renner appears shirtless several times. There is really no romance in the movie, except for an implication at the end that he and Weisz's character have become romantic. There are plenty of curse words, including abuse of God's name. Due to intense violence and foul language, it may be a good idea to pick another movie this weekend as you mourn the end of summer and perhaps bring in a new school year.