

Seasoned pros can't salvage dead 'Tank'

Review by Stephanie Zink

Fiction may just prove itself to be stranger than fact. Case in point: *Tank* (currently at the East Park 3) is a movie about a man who runs down a town with his Sherman tank. Things like this just don't happen.

The whole fiasco starts when Command Sgt. Maj. Zack Carey (James Garner) is transferred to a Georgian Army base near a small town along with his family and a huge tank, which he has painstakingly restored to its World War II splendor.

After his loving wife La Donna (Shirley Jones) and 16-year-old son Billy (C. Thomas Howell) are settled in, Carey goes in search for a piece of the action in the small town. He finds it. He has an encounter with a deputy who slaps a local prostitute named Sarah (Jenilee Harrison), who had been talking with Carey. Carey punches the deputy out.

Later, the deputy and the sheriff, who takes everything that happens to his men personally, conspire to have Billy charged with possession of marijuana, which they plant in his locker at school. They do this to get back at Carey.

Billy is "convicted" and sent to work camp. Carey then drives over and around things in town, including the sheriff's office and blows up a few things like cars before picking up Sarah and going after his son.

Carey, Billy and Sarah spend a few days on the road trying to get to the Tennessee state line while a few of the townsfolk chase the tank around the country, shooting at it with rifles.

The biggest mistake the producer made with *Tank* was making it in the first place. It is boring, meaningless and doesn't have much entertainment value. Most of the action doesn't get started until about midway through the movie. Before then, the film is an intricate web of unnecessary plot drivel, which is rarely interlaced with a little comic relief. None of the comic relief is very funny.

Tank is fashioned after *Smokey and the Bandit* — a vindictive sheriff with a bumbling deputy chasing people breaking the law. The main difference is Carey really didn't break any laws — the law did. That is what is so unbelievable — that a sheriff can actually be the dictator of a town and a small incident in a bar could escalate into almost full-scale war against law enforcement.

One of the best scenes in the movie is when Carey gets into his tank to retrieve his son. That footage could have been used in an army commercial. The viewer also gets a feeling that Carey is about to do something very patriotic. This shows how easily the filmmakers can deceive the public, especially by getting big name talent to act in this movie.


Despite the fact that seasoned pros Garner and Jones did their best to salvage this mess, Howell overshadows them both. As the confused Billy, he successfully plays his part. Unfortunately, nothing short of a miracle could have saved *Tank*.

A tank should have been run over this movie.



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'Stone'...

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Beyond the two main characters, the rest of the cast is equally strong, although a little underused. Danny DeVito, who plays one of the crooks holding Wilder's sister hostage, comes off just like Louie DePalma in the jungle, while Manuel Ojeda is convincing as the villainous Zolo.

With such a monstrous example as *Raiders* to have itself thrown against, *Romancing the Stone* succeeds with its own story and its own comedy.

It's also noteworthy to point out that this adventure film, unlike *Raiders* or any of its television rip-offs, is told from the woman's point of view. That might be a minor point, but it also might be the underlying factor that makes *Stone* a new angle on an old structure.

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