

# 'Gone' has action, very little else

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see maybe what Sena was trying to get at here. How hard it must have been for him to move from a story that painted bad people with clarity to this film. The criminals in "Gone in 60 Seconds" are apparently legendary, but don't perceive what is clear to us 12 seconds after we meet the Ruthless Villain.

The idea of the Ruthless Villain is this: he threatens awful murder unless a particular demand is met - in this case, Raines must steal 50 vintage cars in four days to bail his brother Kip (Giovanni Ribisi) out of a botched job. Making demands is Raymond Calitri (Christopher Eccleston), who we know as the Ruthless Villain because he hates baseball.

The Ruthless Villain construct tells us that meeting the demands does not matter: the man's a Ruthless Villain, which means he's going to kill the Raines brothers anyway. So when the final encounter occurs after long slogs of smoky wheels and car chases over wet streets, it feels like they should have went after him, oh, four days before.

Instead, Memphis, whose

name is never explained to my recollection, comes out of retirement (he was a kiddie go-cart instructor before) to assemble a large crew of fellow retirees and rookies. Among them is Robert Duvall, who stands in the auto shop and crosses cars off the list. Angelina Jolie, who has second billing in this movie, only has 10 or 15 lines.

Jolie plays herself essentially, which works because Angelina Jolie is an odd woman in real life. But just imagine if the heroine had been say, Gwyneth Paltrow.

There's more: two cops with grudges against Memphis (Delroy Lindo and Timothy Olyphant), 2 rival gangs, a silent thief of extraordinary strength (Vinnie Jones), and an ugly dog. The dog figures heavily in the movement of the plot, which reaches critical red-light stage when the dog eats a few car keys and - you guessed it - has to poop it out so the thieves can rifle through the waste and scoop them out. Lovely.

But the frustrating element that looms above all this is the movie's pace - which is marked by a digital clock that reads "to the deadline." Get to it already!

Must we see the criminals take pictures of all the cars they're going to steal? Must we go through a useless subplot of a stolen Cadillac with heroin stashed in the trunk?

When "Gone in 60 Seconds" finally settles down into the main sequence of the car chase, we instantly know it will be inferior to the tunnel chases in "Ronin." We won't bring up the "Connection" or "Bullit" chases here. Just know Cage's wild ride through the Long Beach factory district in a vintage Mustang is less than gripping.

Part of the problem is the music - a techno beat accompanies the whole movie. Part of it is the editing. There is one adrenaline-filled moment where Cage punches the nitro button and the Mustang bolts to 160 mph. But that doesn't make up for 90 minutes of anticipation.

"Gone in 60 Seconds" not only thinks it's humorous, but a riot. So many dead-air jokes have been added to the screenplay, probably after the fact. Sena, or someone, must have known that the drab look of the production,

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