

'The American' worth seeing, but slow compared to Bond flicks



The American

Rated R

3 bagels out of 5

By Howie Nave

In probably one of his most detached roles ever, George Clooney plays an assassin for hire in director Anton Corbijn's "The American." It's ironic, too, because this movie is billed as a dramatic thriller, but most Americans will probably find this movie too slow. By slow I mean no car chases, explosions, mass killings or handheld cameras that make you almost want to throw up until the person behind the camera runs out of steam.

Don't get me wrong, the opening sequence jumps right into the story, shaking up your senses and revealing that Sweden doesn't like Clooney's character Jack (and also going by the name of Edward). But rather a game of cat 'n mouse it's more of who can you trust around any cobblestone corner?

Speaking of trust, Jack doesn't like using too many things high tech where one can be traced. He prefers the low tech style of communication using a land-based phone in a phone

booth for communicating with his superior. He holes up in a small Italian village for his next assignment. Jack is multi-talented too because he's also adept at making firearms from spare parts found in the garage (there's another story going on here, too).



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His contact is the stunning Mathilde (Thekla Reuten), but you're wondering if she too might be trying to eliminate him. Why is it that just when you decide that it's time to get out of a specialized occupation people want you killed off?

Adapted by Rowan Joffe's screenplay (from the novel "A Very Private Gentleman: by Martin Booth) "The American" has Clooney in virtually every scene and proves that his star power is still marketable and can carry a movie. What worked in the movie was Clooney's character coming to terms that he could never have friends or more important an intimate relationship as long as he was on the radar.

His one friend – if you can call him that – is with the local Italian priest, Father Benedetto (Paolo Bonacelli). At first I thought this was an odd association for someone who does nothing but commit sins, but then it made sense for having him as a friend be it either for unloading his sins (doubtful) or

needing someone to be there for a final confession if you laid there dying from a gunshot wound.

Dutch director Corbijn has given us an anti-hero and framed it in a movie that is stylistic with a dark mood in its lead character. Those expecting to see a James Bond type of action movie with a nice, complete ending tying up loose ends will be greatly disappointed. And, yes, there is a love interest in the way of Clara (Violante Placido) who actually is the perfect love interest for him being the local hooker. They're compatible not just because it's in the script, but because when you think about it they both have their assignments and when finished are paid handsomely being experts in their chosen field.

"The American" is rated R for action and adventure, mystery and suspense, drama with a running time of 1 hour 45 minutes.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6 to 10am on KRLT FM-93.9.