

## REVIEWS

## Movie Review: Two Thumbs Up For Smokin Aces

Andrew MacSwain  
Contributor

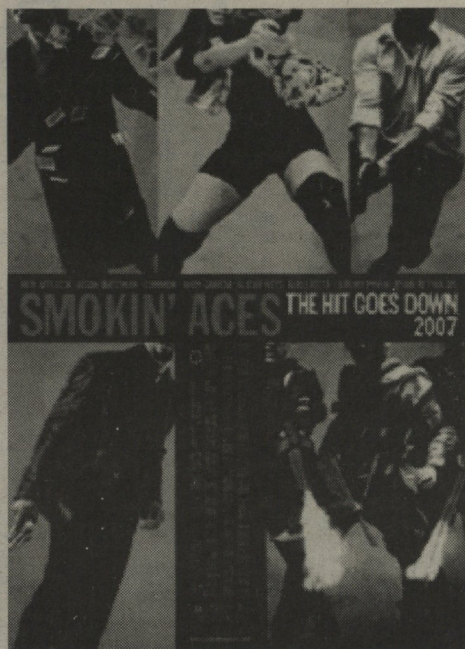
Smokin Aces is an action comedy with a dash of suspense and a pinch of drama. Similar to Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels, Snatch, and Layer Cake, there are multiple things going on throughout the movie and the viewer is left wondering how the movie will conclude until the very end.

What do you get when mix all of this together? A movie that will be enjoyed for years to come.

Smoking Aces is a movie about a mob boss putting a million dollar hit out on Buddy "Aces" Israel, a scum bag card magician who has agreed to rat out the Vegas mob. When word gets out about the bounty on Buddy's head, it attracts professional hit men, hired thugs and seductive lesbian killers to knock off Buddy.

This movie has a star studded cast including the likes of Ben Affleck, Jason Bateman, Peter Berg, Jeremy Piven, Andy Garcia, Ryan Reynolds and the movie debut of Alicia Keys and Common.

Alicia Keys and Common come through with an impressive performance especially for their big screen debut. Not to mention Canadian Ryan Reynolds breaking through with a more serious



role than you may remember him in "Van Wilder." Jeremy Piven who plays Buddy Israel does a great job playing the sleazy card magician whose life is falling apart. He plays his role very well and makes good use of his clever, snappy lines.

Although this movie will not likely be nominated for any of next years Academy Awards it happens to be quite entertaining.

You will leave the movie theater entertained and satisfied so "buy the ticket, take the ride," - Hunter S. Thompson.

## Book Review – Something Borrowed

Beth Lassaline  
Reporter

As Valentines Day is approaching, you may want to indulge in a little light, romantic reading. Emily Giffen's first novel, *Something Borrowed*, complete with a pale pink cover is a chick lit novel about a relationship between two best friends.

Rachel and Darcy have been best friends since public school. They have had a rather uncomplicated relationship that has carried on into their 30s. Rachel, the heroine, is slightly less cool, a little heavier and quite a bit smarter than Darcy is. Unlike Rachel, Darcy has always been attractive, popular and maybe just slightly clueless.

The drama of the book starts on the night of Rachel's 30th birthday party. Everybody is at their local hang out, until Darcy decides to take off early, leaving Rachel to celebrate until the wee hours of the morning with Darcy's fiancé, Dexter.

Rachel, the follow the rules, quintessential good girl wakes up the following morning to find Dex, yes, Darcy's fiancée, naked in her bed. (Don't worry I didn't give anything away, it tells you on the back cover.)

As Rachel desperately tries to quell her growing feelings for Dex, she is torn between telling her best friend that she has committed the ultimate betrayal and following her heart. The real soap opera begins when Darcy, thinking that Rachel is in desperate need for romance, decides to set her up with Dex's best friend, Marcus.

This results in awkward double dates and a shared summer house in the Hamptons.

Meanwhile, Darcy continues to plan her wedding with the help of her maid of honour and best friend Rachel. But please don't feel bad for Darcy; she has her own little secrets that will be sure to surprise any reader.

If you're looking for a light, yet interesting read, I highly recommend choosing *Something Borrowed*. Giffen effectively draws you into a world where finally, the good-looking, popular girl doesn't always get the guy.

I read this book on the beach this summer, but it is equally suitable to be read snuggled up in your favourite PJs accompanied by a large box of chocolate.

I'm sure once you're finished you'll want to run out and grab the sequel to find out what is going to happen to Rachel, Darcy and Dex.

## Atheist Doctrine Stirs the Pot

Kent Aitken  
Reporter

Recently, a website offered free DVDs to anyone publicly announcing their rejection of religion on youtube, calling it "The Blasphemy Challenge." Searching that term turns up 1308 videos: Some are angry responses, news clips covering it, but the vast majority are young people denying the existence of god.

The New York Times' Best Sellers List currently contains two Atheist doctrines: *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins and *Letters to a Christian Nation* by Sam Harris. MacLean's has listed Dawkins' book at the top of its non-fiction list for weeks.

Atheists, it seems, are coming out of the closet.

This, naturally, is upsetting people. And *The God Delusion* is at the heart of the controversy. Dawkins has taken a lot of heat for his pointed attack on religion. Among the slew of mail he gets telling him that he's wrong, many question why he's so militant about the subject, so seemingly intolerant. An entire chapter is dedicated to defending the necessity of his work.

Writers denouncing faith is by no means new - arguments and counterarguments about God's existence have been popular philosophical topics for centuries. *The God Delusion*, however, appears to be the spearhead of a unique mainstream movement. As well, the book ridicules parts of religion, and far removed from philosophical debate, boils down to Dawkins delivering harsh statements: Essentially, that believing in god is wrong and harmful.

Much of the book revolves around Dawkins' experiences and responses related to the debate. Using these as examples, he dissects many arguments for god's existence, a well-documented banter. Improbability (how incredibly unlikely it would be that humanity's current state would arise by chance) and its ally Intelligent Design are the issues he spends most of his energy on, responding to misunderstandings about evolution and the nature of the universe that aid the designer theory.

I feel compelled to refrain from elaborating, but one idea is too interesting: According to Dawkins, and I can't source this (although I did find similar stats), estimates for the number of planets in our galaxy range between 1 and 30 billion. Further, it has been estimated that there are 100 billion galaxies in the universe (apparently it's HUGE). Dawkins estimates a billion billion planets to make this point: If each planet had a one in one billion chance of life originating, it would still happen on one billion planets. Maybe we did just win the lottery, and

### The GOD Delusion

Richard Dawkins

*Richard Dawkins' best seller:*

*The God Delusion.*

Photo from Amazon.com

there are 999,999,999 planets without any life to complain about losing. Building on ideas like that, arguably the least concrete but most startling, Dawkins offers the conclusion that "there is almost certainly no God." He admits that even his view prevents him from denying the possibility completely - the invisible, intangible nature of God makes it impossible to prove with complete certainty either existence or non-existence. Dawkins' central point, built on the foundation of rejection of all points in favour of existence, is that to him, God's existence is at least as unexplainable as anything else: "A designer God cannot be used to explain organized complexity because any God capable of designing anything would have to be complex enough to demand the same kind of explanation in his own right."

Only 159 pages in, less than halfway through the text, Dawkins is satisfied with his premise against God and turns to the question of religion, in the process explaining why he's driving the movement against it. This raises as many questions as God's existence - Why is religion so widespread, even in cultures with no outside religious influence? Does religion provide morality? What's wrong with religion?

Dawkins' book could certainly be a troubling read for many believers, but the positions of belief and non-belief are generally very well planted. Non-believers will read and feel secure. Believers will turn to the arguments contradicting those of Dawkins. Those in the middle will have their cages rattled, some swaying - and Richard Dawkins will continue to receive vicious hate mail from the deeply religious, which does more to prove his point than anything else.