

Waking up is hard to do for Austin Powers

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Bond movies in Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery.

In the film, which Myers also wrote, co-produced and probably had much more to do with than he's letting on, he plays a nasty-toothed British secret agent who, after a 30-year deep sleep, is reanimated to save the world from a madman named Dr. Evil (also played by Myers) who was also cryogenically preserved since 1967.

But they both quickly learn that the world is a different place since they were last conscious. Powers' free loving ways are no longer politically correct and Dr. Evil's world domination plans are not as threatening as they may have once been.

Similarly, his idea of what constitutes a ransom is a little out of date.

Decked out in de rigueur Carnaby Street crushed velvet suits, go-go boots and frilly cravats, Powers spends more time trying to shag the birds, in particular his new sidekick played by Elizabeth Hurley and Dr. Evil's seductive assistant (whose name is not fit for publication in a family paper), and worrying about the condition of his meat and two veg than he does fighting the bad guys.

As with the previous So I married an Axe Murderer, Myers is at his hysterical best when he's left to his own devices.

When he's cracking the wit, especially as the Kojak-looking Dr. Evil, the film's hilarious.

But as soon as director Jay Roach returns to the narrative, things tend to drag as do some of the jokes.

Put simply, Myers is an unstoppable comedic tour-de-force, but as a film...well that's another story.

However, there's enough good-humored goofiness to carry things for 90 minutes.

RUSSELL'S BREAKDOWN

If it's true that time flies when you're having fun, I must have been having a blast watching Breakdown because the 90-minute film seemed to whiz by.

And yes, that's a compliment. Kurt Russell stars as a husband caught in the middle of a deadly game of cat and mouse with a group of brutally violent kidnapers who snatch his wife (Kathleen Quinlan) while en route to their new home in California.

Making his feature-film debut, director Jonathan Mostow has created a tense, gripping film that is a non-stop, edge-of-your-seat thriller.

Russell delivers an almost flawless performance as the tormented husband who is forced to come up with the ransom or make the risky rescue attempt on his own as does J.T. Walsh as the gang leader.

Looking and feeling like a cross between Deliverance and The Vanishing, Breakdown is as frighteningly realistic as it is enjoyable.

Director Ron Howard and Mel Gibson should take note if they plan on making a sequel to Ransom; this is how a kidnapping film is supposed to be done.

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