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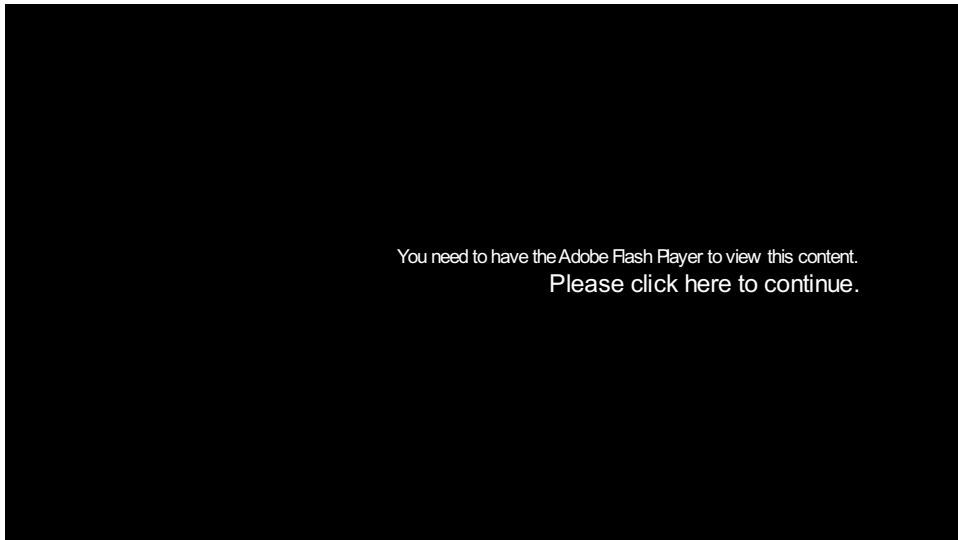
Movie review: No Clue is a noir to remember (with trailer)

Brent Butt's silly, Vancouver-shot detective story lays on charm

BY JAY STONE, POSTMEDIA NEWS MARCH 6, 2014

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Watch the trailer for the film No Clue.

No Clue

Rating: 3½ stars out of 5

Starring: Brent Butt, Amy Smart, David Koechner

Directed by: Carl Bessai

Running time: 96 minutes

A fumbling private eye and a beautiful dame: there are few novelties in the comedy *No Clue*, except maybe for the private eye. His name is Leo Falloon and he's not really a detective. He's a guy who sells engraved pens and fancy key fobs. "Novelty crap," someone calls them, and he says, "It's not novelty crap. It's specialty crap."

Leo is played by Brent Butt, the *Corner Gas* star who brings with him the same kind of Everyman charm and sneaky humour. Vancouver-shot *No Clue* is low-key, silly and funny in an offbeat Canadian fashion: "Google

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around on your Internet machine," Leo might ask a friend, when he wants some research done. He's out of it in the all the best ways.

He runs Boffo Specialty Advertising, which can engrave pens or imprint matchbooks with your company's slogan. It's in a rundown building just down the hall from Empire Private Investigations, and the mysterious Kyra (Amy Smart) wanders into the wrong office when she is looking for a gumshoe to find her missing brother.

"I'm afraid he might be ... I can't even say the word," Kyra says.

"Dead?" asks Leo, unhelpfully.

The sexy blond ("a smouldering tower of nuclear hotitude," Leo calls her) is a staple of this kind of story: Kyra could have walked out of The Maltese Falcon, allowing for a rather mushier edge, and factoring in the complication that Leo is a somewhat soft-boiled dick. He takes the job because he's attracted to Kyra, and it plunges him into the world of video games and a complex case of betrayal and dirty-doings that make hardly any sense at all: Raymond Chandler would have been proud.

No Clue pays the occasional offhand tribute to the history of the tough-guy private eye — the missing man works for a video game company called Glass Key, the name of a novel by Dashiell Hammett — but with a distinctly homegrown edge. Butt's screenplay gives his character lots of opportunity for affectionate fumbling and thrown-off self-deprecation as learns about corporate shenanigans, IPOs, and other modern bafflements. He's the kind of private eye who, when things get primal — when he stumbles into a house to find broken glass and blood on the floor — you can count on to go running out the door yelling, "Not good. Not good."

Leo's personality is roughed up a bit by the sandpaper of David Koechner as Ernie, his best friend, confidante and constant critic. This might be Koechner's one performance — he has a similar role of abrasive insanity in the Anchorman movies — but it adds a needed touch of acid to Butt's stumblebum confusions.

Director Carl Bessai keeps the action bubbling and effervescent, even as the so-called plot slips and slides from this set-piece to that one. Things run out of steam in a hurry in the final reel, but that's fine as well: No Clue is the sort of movie that gets in, gets out and doesn't wear out its welcome. Like Butt himself, it's silly in all the best ways.

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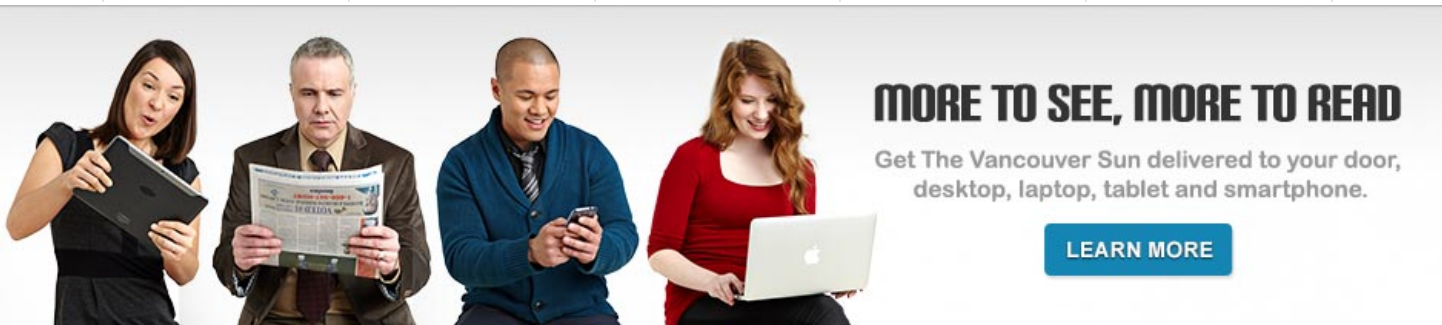
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