



DirectBuy Imagine Your Dream Kitchen at Direct Insider Prices.
 Cabinets Lighting Flooring Appliances Furniture Electronics
 Get Your FREE Visitor's Pass

movie reviews

Reviews Great Movies Answer Man People Commentary Festivals Oscars Glossary One-Minute Reviews Letters Roger Ebert's Journal Scanners Store

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES News Sports Business Entertainment Classifieds Columnists

search

GO Search powered by YAHOO!

register

You are not logged in.

Log in »

Subscribe to weekly newsletter »

answer man

03/31/2010 »

times & tickets

Fandango Search movie showtimes and buy tickets.

about us

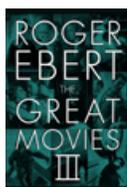
About the site »

Site FAQs »

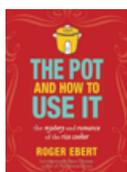
Contact us »

Email the Movie Answer Man »

on sale now



Buy now »



Buy now »

KNIGHT AND DAY (PG-13)

Ebert: ★★★ Users: ★★★ You: [Rate this movie right now](#)



Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz ride with the SFX bulls.

Knight and Day

BY ROGER EBERT / June 21, 2010

"Knight and Day" aspires to the light charm of a romantic action comedy like "Charade" or "Romancing the Stone," but would come closer if it dialed down the relentless action. The romance part goes without saying after a Meet Cute contrived in an airport, and the comedy seems to generate naturally between [Tom Cruise](#) and [Cameron Diaz](#). But why do so many summer movies find it obligatory to inflict us with CGI overkill? I'd sorta rather see Diaz and Cruise in action scenes on a human scale, rather than have it rubbed in that for long stretches, they're essentially replaced by animation.

Have summer audiences been so hammered down by special effects that they require noise and fragmented visuals to hold their interest? Is it still possible to delight in a story unfolding with charm and wit? How many machine guns do you need in a romantic comedy? If you have charismatic stars like Cruise and Diaz and an A-List director, do you have to hedge your

cast & credits

Roy Miller [Tom Cruise](#)
 June Havens [Cameron Diaz](#)
 Fitzgerald Peter Sarsgaard
 Director George Viola Davis
 Antonio Jordi Molla
 Molly Celia Weston

20th Century Fox presents a film directed by [James Mangold](#). Written by Patrick O'Neill. Running time: 109 minutes. Rated PG-13 (for sequences of action violence throughout and brief strong language). Opening Wednesday at local theaters, with midnight screenings today at selected locales.

Printer-friendly »
 E-mail this to a friend »



Substantial Savings. 700+ Trusted Brands

Cabinets Lighting Flooring Appliances Furniture Electronics

DirectBuy FREE Visitor's Pass >

in theaters

latest reviews

- [Vengeance](#)
- [Eat Pray Love](#)
- [The Extra Man](#)

[more current releases »](#)

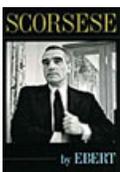
one-minute movie reviews

still playing

- [The A-Team](#)
- [Accomplices](#)
- [Agora](#)
- [Best Worst Movie](#)
- [Cell 211](#)
- [Coco Chanel and Igor Stravinsky](#)
- [Crospey](#)
- [Cyrus](#)
- [Daddy Longlegs](#)
- [Despicable Me](#)
- [Dinner for Schmucks](#)
- [Dogtooth](#)
- [Eat Pray Love](#)
- [The Extra Man](#)
- [Farewell](#)
- [The Father of My Children](#)
- [Get Him to the Greek](#)
- [Get Low](#)
- [The Girl Who Played with Fire](#)
- [Grown Ups](#)
- [Holy Rollers](#)
- [I am Love](#)
- [Inception](#)
- [Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work](#)
- [Jonah Hex](#)
- [The Karate Kid](#)
- [The Kids are All Right](#)
- [The Killer Inside Me](#)
- [Knight and Day](#)



[Buy now](#) »



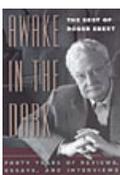
[Buy now](#) »



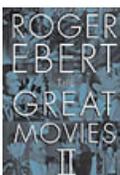
[Buy now](#) »



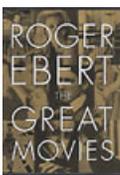
[Buy now](#) »



[Buy now](#) »



[Buy now](#) »



[Buy now](#) »

iPads for only \$13.58?

Breaking News: iPads are being auctioned at 95% off retail....

[SwipeBids.com](http://swipebids.com)

bets?

The movie is entertaining, but could have been better. The director is [James Mangold](#), whose previous two films were "[Walk the Line](#)" and "[3:10 to Yuma](#)." I have a hunch there was an early draft of Patrick O'Neill's script that was more in the [Cary Grant](#) rom-com tradition and then somebody decided the effects had to be jacked up. From the ads, you could get the notion this is a [Michael Bay](#) film.

The wonder is that Cruise and Diaz are effective enough in their roles that they're not overwhelmed by all the commotion surrounding them. They make the movie work because they cheerfully project that they know it's utter nonsense and pitch in to enjoy the fun. I've been reading that movie stars can no longer "sell" a blockbuster movie. Audiences buy the concept, brand name, packaging, whatever. If that's true, which I doubt, it would mean a victory of technology over humans. If it comes true, it will be because movies have lost interest in creating and shaping characters we care about — because they're using actors as insert shots in special effects.

The plot makes splendid use of a MacGuffin, the device which explains everything by explaining nothing. Roy Miller, the Cruise character, has something, and there are bad guys who want it. I could tell you what it is, but what difference does it make? That's the whole point of a MacGuffin. Anyway, Roy "happens" to run into June Havens, the Diaz character, at an airport, for reasons you will discover. That's the manipulated Meet Cute. Now this next part you will want to follow closely.

They both end up on the same airplane, which has no other passengers, except some men scattered here and there. She goes to the restroom. He kills all the men and both pilots, then sits the dead passengers upright in "Weekend at Bernie's" style. She comes out of the restroom, not having heard the gunshots. He crash-lands the plane in a field and urges her to follow him in escaping FBI agents who are after them.

But ... but ... was there no other way for the bad guys to get the MacGuffin than by taking over a scheduled flight? Maybe, I dunno, snatch him on the ground? How did the FBI know the plane would crash — and where? Also, if you track who has possession of the MacGuffin during various times at the airport, you'll go crazy. Mind you, I'm not complaining. The movie knows this sequence is monumentally silly, and so do Cruise and Diaz, and Cruise keeps up a reassuring line of patter all during it, even while trying to crash-land safely.

That stuff is entertaining. There's also a running joke about how much ground they cover in an international chase. The movie was shot on location in Massachusetts, Spain (where they are chased by bulls), California, Jamaica, Austria and Kankakee, Ill., which has an excellent Steak 'n Shake off Interstate 57. Whether the actors were actually there on all those locations is a good question. Maybe only the green screen stuff was shot on location.

Such matters are irrelevant in a movie that makes not the slightest pretense of realism. Cruise and Diaz are fully scripted throughout with nonstop bantering and one-liners. They never seriously discuss their situation. They spend half the movie in dire danger. Thousands of bullets miss them. By motorcycle, car, train, airplane and parachute, they survive anything.

That girl June, she's a trouper. She follows Roy everywhere and believes everything he says. But ... but ... why does she need to come along? Roy has the MacGuffin. She was a witness, you say? To what? I'll tell you why she has to be along. It's because this is a romantic action comedy starring [Tom Cruise](#) and [Cameron Diaz](#), that's why.

So all of that I accept, and even applaud, and I observe that Diaz has one of the most winning grins in the movies. Basically, what I wanted was more of it. Some of that [Cary Grant](#) dialogue. More flirtation. More of a feeling the characters, not the production, were in the foreground. More of the stars. Because movie stars really do make a difference. I insist on it.

- [Knight and Day](#)
- [The Last Airbender](#)
- [Life During Wartime](#)
- [Love Ranch](#)
- [Marmaduke](#)
- [Mercy](#)
- [Micmacs](#)
- [La Mission](#)
- [Mother and Child](#)
- [9500 Liberty](#)
- [October Country](#)
- [OSS 117: Lost in Rio](#)
- [Predators](#)
- [Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time](#)
- [Princess Kaiulani](#)
- [Putty Hill](#)
- [Ramona and Beezus](#)
- [Restrepo](#)
- [Salt](#)
- [Sex and the City 2](#)
- [A Small Act](#)
- [A Small Act](#)
- [Solitary Man](#)
- [Something Better Somewhere Else](#)
- [The Sorcerer's Apprentice](#)
- [Splice](#)
- [Spoken Word](#)
- [Survival of the Dead](#)
- [Toy Story 3](#)
- [The Twilight Saga: Eclipse](#)
- [The Twilight Saga: Eclipse](#)
- [Vengeance](#)
- [Wild Grass](#)
- [The Wild Hunt](#)
- [Winter's Bone](#)

[more current releases](#) »

on dvd

new on dvd

- [Louie Bluie](#) ★★★★★ (8/10)
- [The Joneses](#) ★★ (8/10)
- [The Good Heart](#) ★★ (8/10)
- [Crumb](#) ★★★★★ (8/10)
- [Woodstock](#) ★★★★★ (8/3)
- [Spaceballs](#) ★★★ (8/3)
- [The Princess Bride](#) ★★★★★ (8/3)
- [Kick-Ass](#) ★ (8/3)
- [The Ghost Writer](#) ★★★★★ (8/3)
- [Diary of a Wimpy Kid](#) ★★★★★ (8/3)

[more new on dvd](#) »

coming on dvd

- [The Conversation](#) ★★★★★ (8/17)
- [City Island](#) ★★★ (8/24)
- [Survival of the Dead](#) ★★ (8/24)
- [Red Riding Trilogy](#) ★★★★★ (8/31)

[more coming on dvd](#) »

great movies on dvd

- [Vivre sa Vie / My Life to Live](#) (4/20)
- [Viridiana](#) (4/29)
- [Walkabout](#) (5/18)
- [Come and See](#) (6/16)
- [The Red Shoes](#) (7/20)
- [Farqo](#) ★★★★★ (8/3)
- [Woodstock](#) (8/3)
- [Crumb](#) (8/10)

[more great movies on dvd »](#)

Got a Computer? Make \$67/Hr From Home!

A Local Mom Shows Us Her Simple Secret To Making \$5,687 a Month Online
NYGazetteJour...

Your city: Can You Really Make Money Online

Or is it a scam? We investigate a mom that tried it - Read Her Story!
News13JobsRep...

<p><u>Mortgage Rates Hit 3.25%</u> If you owe less than \$729k you probably www.SeeRefinanceRates.com</p>
<p><u>Drivers With No DUI Are Paying Too Much</u> If you haven't had a DUI you are paying Auto-Insurance-Experts.com</p>
<p><u>Watch Free Movies Online</u> Watch Free Movies Online With the ALOT Movie.alot.com</p>
<p><u>Local Movie Theaters</u> Serving Federal Way Area. Contact Info. QuickYellow.com</p>

Ads by Yahoo!



© copyright 2010, rogerebert.com

[Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Submission Guidelines](#)

DirectBuy
The Home Improvement & Furniture Club

Imagine Your Dream Kitchen at Direct Insider Prices.

- Cabinets
- Flooring
- Furniture
- Lighting
- Appliances
- Electronics

Get Your **FREE** Visitor's Pass