



Choose a Section

Search bar with a magnifying glass icon.

## REVIEWS



SAN ANDREAS

| Glenn Kenny

May 29, 2015 | 40

In a match between a supremely catastrophic California earthquake and the former wrestling star turned movie action hero Dwayne Johnson (a.k.a. [The Rock](#), aptly enough here I guess, although he's not thusly credited), who are you going to bet on? For movie purposes, the latter, of course. Since we're all agreed on that, I suppose it spoils nothing to inform you that there's almost nothing surprising about "San Andreas."

Kind of noteworthy, if not actually remarkable, then, is that the movie actually works as well as it does, offering up suspense set pieces that are genuinely suspenseful despite one's security that everyone in the top-billed cast that we're supposed to care about will be okay. The direction by [Brad Peyton](#) is particularly effective during the brisk scenes of disaster, from the felling of Hoover Dam to the snapping of the Golden Gate Bridge. I'm not sure whether it was the editing or my own willing suspension of disbelief but the CGI-manufactured scenes of mass destruction are among the most realistic in this mode I've ever seen.

Spectacles of disaster have been a staple of movies ever since they began, so I'm not one to complain about them, or to snicker at the supposed irony of Hollywood so blithely exploiting a potential reality (for all I know, the data spouted by a seismologist played by [Paul Giamatti](#) in the film's early scenes could be 100 percent true, and California is in fact overdue to tumble into the sea) for our entertainment value. The personal story attached to this earthquake saga has Johnson's Ray Gaines, an uber-competent (of course) helicopter rescue dude, saving both his estranged wife and their college bound daughter from the tectonic destruction. Think "Earthquake" meets "Towering Inferno" meets "[Die Hard](#)," but a lot more streamlined. Ray's wife, Emma ([Carla Gugino](#)) has taken up with another fella, extremely rich architect Daniel (Ioan Gruffud), the latter of whom is escorting daughter Blake ([Alexandra Daddario](#)) to San Francisco. Plot logic dictates that one of these characters turns out to be a weasel, and the one you expect is the weasel indeed, and to top it off he's got a really bitchy sister too. While disaster movies of past eras let the viewer build up a nice head of disdain for their weasely characters before suitably dispensing with them, "San Andreas" is both too fleetly action-packed and too damn nice to provide many hisses. Instead, the movie compels Johnson and Gugino to play dodge-em with falling buildings via chopper, mediate some super-size potholes in a four-by-four, do some impromptu sky-diving when there's suddenly no viable airport runway to land a small plane on, and much, much more.

In the meantime, her-father's-daughter survivalist Blake, with two young British fellows who seem to have been outsourced from a discarded [Richard Curtis](#) script, navigates the city by the bay, which the earthquake has turned into a kind of anti-funhouse: moving sidewalks, falling power lines, and shooting flames all dodge their tracks. And this is even before the tsunamis come into play. How will Ray and Emma find their girl, and will finding their girl help them resolve the tragedy in their backstory that drove them apart to begin with? As I mentioned earlier, there are really no surprises here. But the action is bracing, Johnson's performance is solid and, within its extremely narrow parameters, entirely convincing, and Gugino and Daddario are both gritty and attractive. The result is a pretty exemplary popcorn movie.

Print Page

Like 106

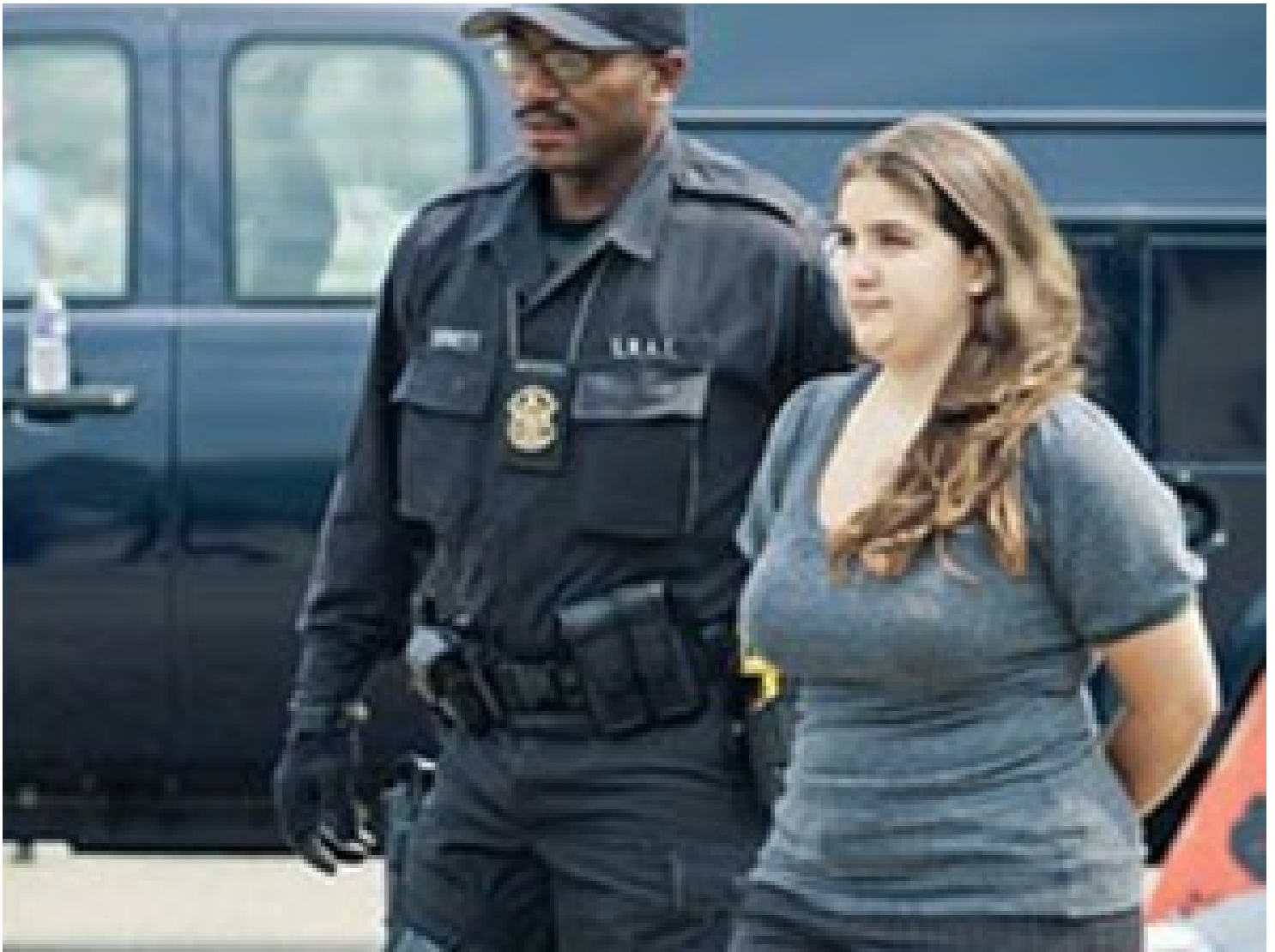
+1 7

More Reviews and a Few Great Offers!

Ads by Adblade



Americans can't believe that new site is legal. Search your name before it gets banned!



New Rule in Virginia Leaves Drivers Furious and Shocked



These 15 once-rich people had it all, and then lost it all.



How To Reduce Neuropathy Nerve Pain



This Crocodile Was Swallowed Whole By This Massive Python!



16 Child Stars Who Grew Up To Be Super Attractive!

## POPULAR BLOG POSTS

---

[Video games can never be art](#) Roger Ebert

Having once made the statement above, I have declined all opportunities to...

---

[Mad Max: Day of Wrath](#) Olivia Collette

An FFC writes about the use of Giuseppe Verdi's "Dies Irae" in "Mad Max: Fury Road".

---

["Aquarius" and "The Whispers" Launch Network Summer TV Season](#) Brian Tallerico

Reviews of new series on NBC and ABC.

---

## POPULAR REVIEWS

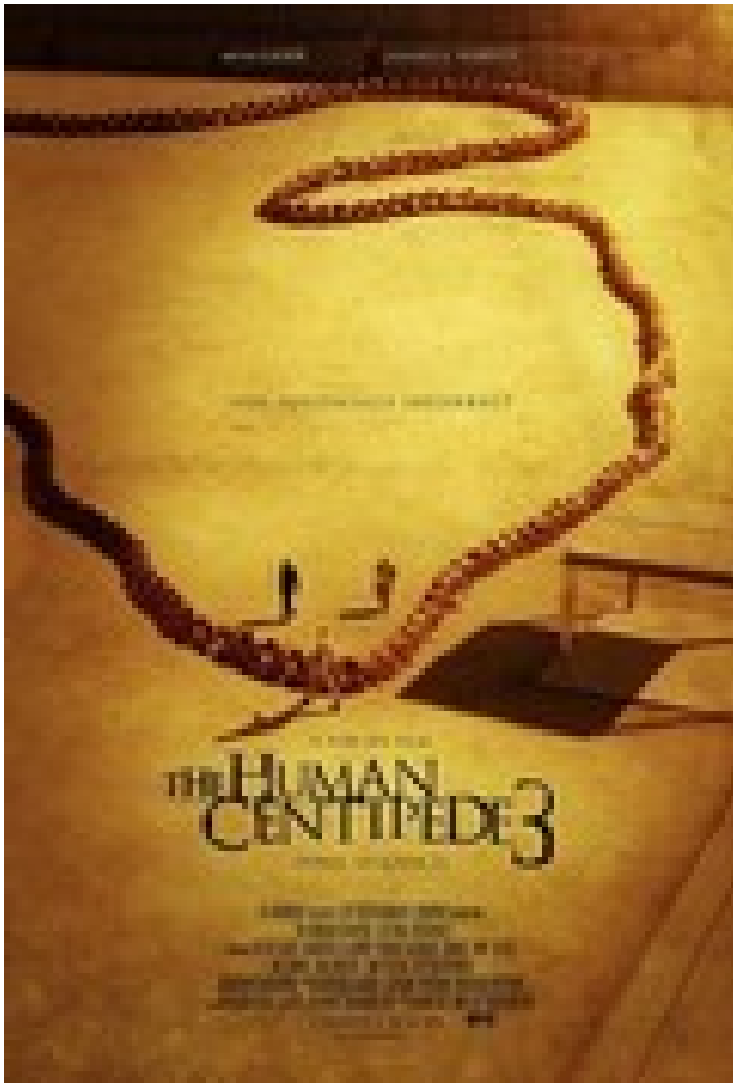


San Andreas  
□ □ □

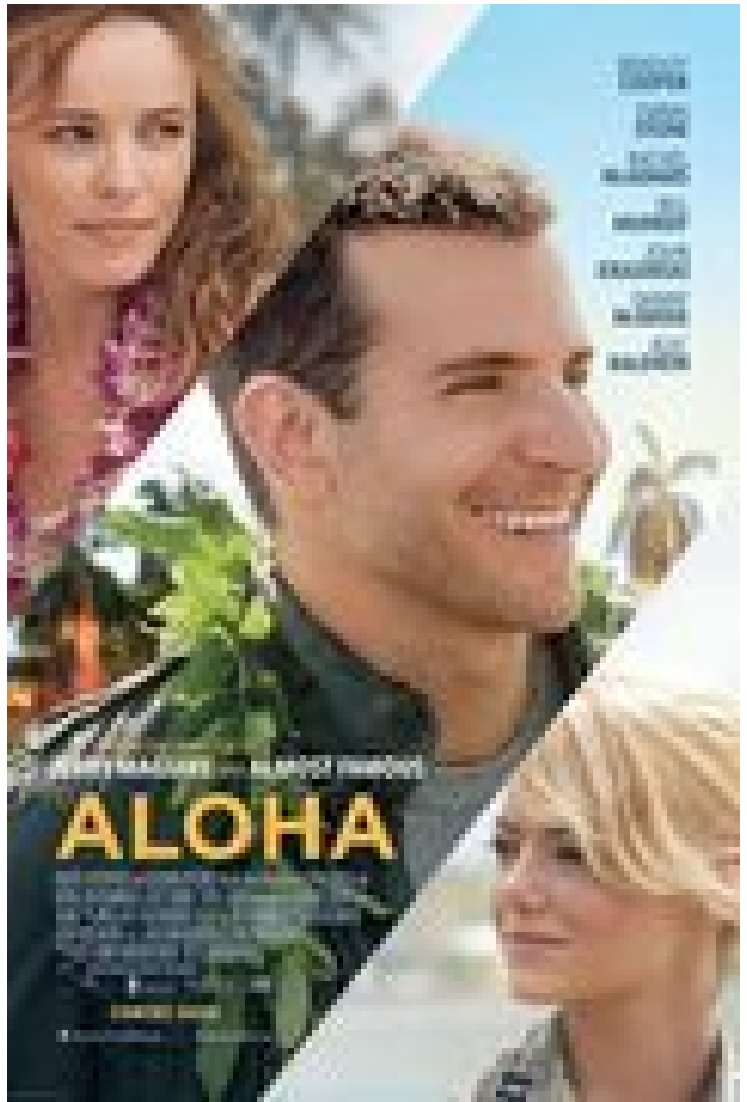


Tomorrowland  
□ □ □





The Human Centipede 3 (Final Sequence)



Aloha

□ □

Reveal Comments



**SAN ANDREAS (2015)**

Cast

- Dwayne Johnson as Ray
- Alexandra Daddario as Blake
- Carla Gugino as Emma
- Ioan Gruffudd as Daniel Riddick
- Archie Panjabi as Serena
- Paul Giamatti as Lawrence
- Kylie Minogue as Beth Riddick
- Will Yun Lee as Dr Kim Park

Director

Brad Peyton

Screenplay

Carlton Cuse

Cinematography

Steve Yedlin

Action, Drama, Thriller

Rated PG-13 for intense disaster action and mayhem throughout, and brief strong language

114 minutes

A D V E

## 4 veggies to never eat:

Cut down a bit of stomach fat every day by never eating these 4 foods.



### SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MAILING LIST

Enter Your Email Address

Subscribe

A D V E

## The Ebert Club

The Ebert Club is our hand-picked selection of content for Ebert fans. You will receive a weekly newsletter full of movie-related tidbits, articles, trailers, even the occasional streamable movie. Club members also get access to our members-only section on RogerEbert.com

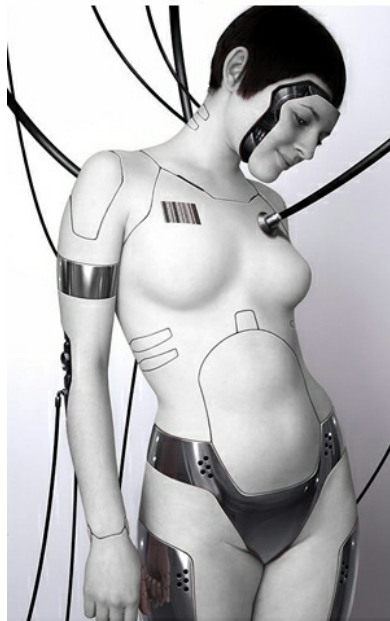
Premiere Member : \$20.00USD - yearly

Subscribe



A D V E

“The Next Step In Evolution” 



**Are You Ready?**  
[Watch Incredible Video](#) 

## REVIEWS RSS

## IN THEATERS



- [Love at First Fight](#)
- [Poltergeist](#)
- [The Farewell Party](#)
- [The Human Centipede 3 \(Final Sequence\)](#)
- [Tomorrowland](#)
- [When Marnie Was There](#)
- [Güeros](#)
- [Animals](#)
- [Area 51](#)
- [Bessie](#)

### MOVIE REVIEWS

- [Reviews](#)
- [Great Movies](#)

### BLOGS

- [Roger Ebert's Journal](#)
- [Chaz's Blog](#)
- [MZS](#)
- [Far Flungers](#)
- [Tom Shales At Large](#)
- [Scanners](#)

### CHANNELS

- [Balder and Dash](#)
- [Demanders](#)
- [Thumbnails](#)
- [Interviews](#)
- [Festivals & Awards](#)
- [Sundance](#)
- [Life Itself](#)

Cannes  
Tributes to Roger  
Letters  
Opening Shots Project

## CONTRIBUTORS

Roger Ebert  
Chaz Ebert  
Matt Zoller Seitz  
Brian Tallerico  
Simon Abrams  
Godfrey Cheshire  
Odie Henderson  
Glenn Kenny  
Christy Lemire  
Sheila O'Malley  
Susan Wloszczyna  
Ali Arikian  
Jim Beaver  
Steven Boone  
Danny Bowes  
Dave Bunting  
Sean Burns  
Dan Callahan  
Christopher Campbell  
Jen Chaney  
Seongyong Cho  
Olivia Collette  
Edward Copeland  
Brian Doan  
Aurore Duiguo  
Justine Elias  
Steve Erickson  
Matt Fagerholm  
Sam Fragoso  
Bruce Fretts  
Noah Gittell  
Michael A. Gonzales  
Ian Grey  
Scott Jordan Harris  
Rowan Kaiser  
Wael Khairy  
Ben Kenigsberg  
Joyce Kulhawik  
Kevin B. Lee  
Donald Liebenson  
Craig D. Lindsey  
Laya Maheshwari  
Marsha McCreadie  
Patrick Z. McGavin  
Neil Minow  
Michael Mirasol  
Jana Monji  
Omar Moore  
Omer M. Mozaffar  
Lisa Nesselson  
Scott Nye  
Michał Oleszczyk  
R. Kurt Osenlund  
Kartina Richardson  
Alyssa Rosenber  
Lisa Rosman  
Nick Schager  
Barbara Scharres  
Charlie Schmidlin  
Tom Shales  
Krishna Bala Sheno  
Peter Sobczynski  
Collin Souter  
Bill Stamets  
Scout Tafoya  
ReBecca Theodore-Vachon  
Katherine Tulich

Gerardo Valero  
Pablo Villaça  
Ignatiy Vishnevetsky  
Grace Wang  
Anath White  
Max Winter

---

© Copyright 2015, Ebert Digital LLC

[About the Site](#) [Contact Us](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Use](#)

[Movies by Letter](#) [Cast and Crew](#)

