

"The Interview" fails to meet expectations

Austin Gonzalez
OPINION EDITOR

What is there to say about Seth Rogen and James Franco's new movie? There was an extensive back and forth over the release of the film. Between Sony hacks, Cinema back outs, and Obama's condemnation of Sony's initial decision to pull down the film entirely, a lot has happened since the November announcement.

At the end of the day, the controversy has stirred up enthusiasm in all camps over this rather unworthy film.

Dave Skylark (Franco) is the host of a TMZ-style nighttime news show. As his friend and producer, Aaron Rapoport (Rogen) celebrates his 1000th episode with the show, the pair begins to feel a lack of respect. One thing leads to another and then the CIA recruits them to assassinate the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). It's only slightly more ridiculous than it sounds. The jokes are all very immature. If you like butts, chubs, and Katy Perry, then you will be laughing non-stop. Otherwise, audience members will enjoy the spectacle with a feeling of shock and bafflement.

The film was funny, but offensive. It's not clever, but I don't think it pretends to be. The publicity drummed up by this movie has made it into more than what was originally intended.

This movie doesn't win awards in any category. There have been more vulgar or offensive films such as Bruno or Jackass. There have been funnier films and many

better satires. It's not good; it's just a movie.

Many people have a problem with this movie at a fundamental level. For the record, this movie shouldn't be considered offensive because of clichéd jokes, stereotypes, and a "Harro, Prees." This is a movie that makes a joke of the CIA assassinating a (whether we like it or not) world leader. If the tables were turned and there was a movie to come out about the assassination of specifically Obama, particularly from a country which is viewed as an enemy, we might have a few strong words to say about it ourselves. It's tasteless and clearly sought to capitalize on a hot button issue. As soon as Sony was targeted, they pulled down the film.

At the end of the day, in the name of freedom of speech we have to allow Sony to make the decision to release this film. Furthermore, we have a duty to protect its release. No one should have the right to force Sony to release-or withdraw the film. The film was terrible. To be honest, it was distasteful and I don't believe it should have been released or even made. But this movie isn't worth the fight.

One final note: because of the controversy surrounding this film, as soon as it became available, my father started downloading it. At that time we were a few thousand feet over the gulf on our way home. We watched it, as a family, Christmas day after traveling for over twenty hours. If there's one thing that is indisputable about this movie, it's that it is not a Christmas movie. It is not a family movie.



Image courtesy of businessinsider.com

The good, the bad, "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies"

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The most recent and final addition to "The Hobbit" is the greatest one yet, in that it brings with it the end to Jackson's uninspired drivel. "The Unexpected Journey" was a bad start to a highly anticipated trek back into the Lord of the Rings universe.

Featuring twelve cardboard dwarves with less character than their cousins in "Snow White," audiences spend more than half the "journey" watching flashbacks. In the "Desolation of Smaug," we depart from the source material and ruin the fantasy world that was once so consistent. "The Battle of the Five Armies" relies on big screen shock and awe to tie up this poorly retold story. The plot isn't memorable. Even after dutifully spending 144 minutes viewing the movie, I had to watch it again to

remind myself of what really happened.

With over an hour of the screen time being dedicated to fighting, it's unsurprising that not much is done to create memorable moments. "The Battle of the Five Armies" truly is a film solely about a battle of armies. The basic rundown is what we've seen in the past, but with larger ramifications. Thorin is a jerk; Thranduil is a jerk; there's mortal peril.

The interpretation is bad. Tolkien's universe is massive and Jackson decided to do away with that, and make his own. His interpretation of the "Dragon's Greed" under the mountain and other elements key to his story are without backing. During the battle, there a few brief moments where the audience catches a glimpse of "were-worms." These massive creatures aren't a part of the battle in the source, they aren't consistent with the source, and to top it off they don't truly exist in the

source (They're mentioned once in a Hobbit idiom.)

Aside from the elements themselves, their composition is lazy. The cinematography is old hat after 5 movies of similar sequences. Between long segments of tiny people burgeoning ugly people with the help of the tall people, there are establishing shots of scenery. These moments do less to make the audience "ooh and ahh" than they do to pull you out of the experience. Were you watching a dwarf getting swashed by a troll baby? Well then, now is definitely the time for a picture of this snowy mountain.

At the end of the day, it's a terribly poor example of what one of our best directors can produce. In the "Lord of the Rings," what you see is an internal conflict and an external conflict play out simultaneously. Frodo and journey to destroy the ring is about the

strength of self. The raging battle of good and evil happens alongside and provides a contrast that is part of the same story. The eleven hour saga of "Lord of the Rings" is able to maintain audiences' attention through its combination of characters, score, and story. The possibility of redemption for this movie does not save it from being a terrible movie, but gives it a justification for even existing. "The Hobbit" is a children's book. It's a collection of bed time stories tied together; each chapter is its own exciting adventure curtailed by a cliff hanger ending.

If Peter Jackson was aiming at the child audience, then he made a movie that children could enjoy. There are fart jokes, there are tons of gigantic things to "ooh and aah" at, and there is a battle scene. (To be clear, the battle scene is the movie.) The Hobbit movies have been a mess from beginning to end.

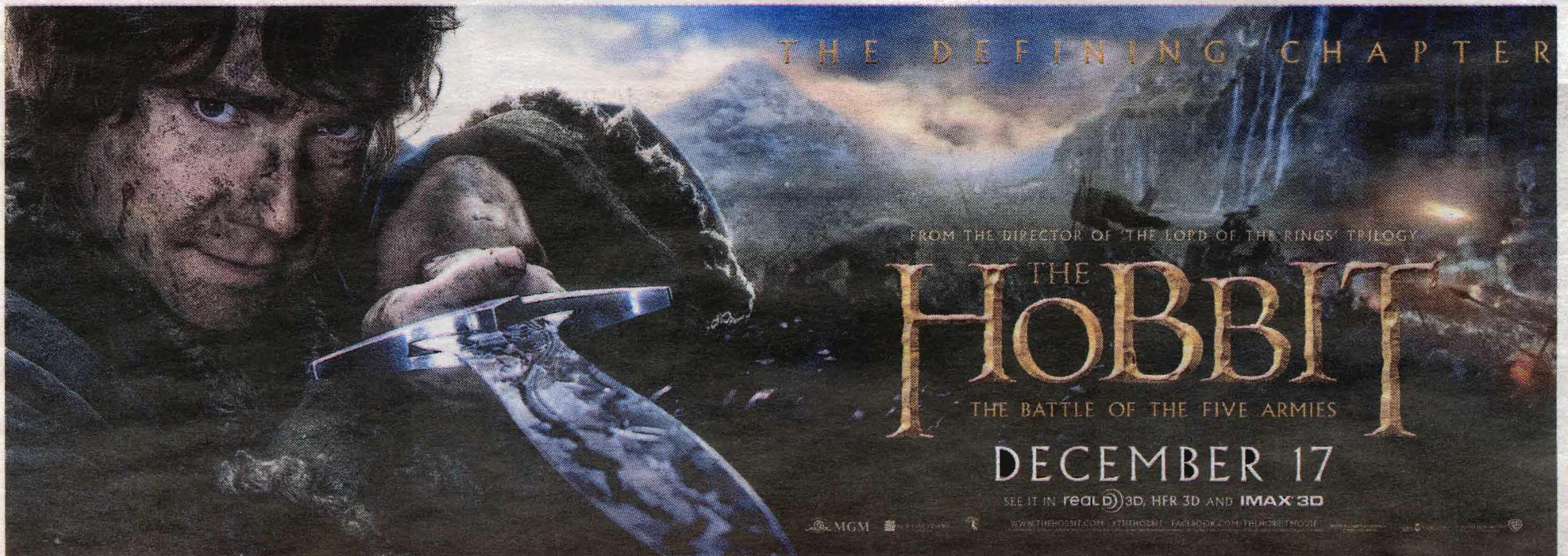


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