

Hollywood To Storm The White House

BY STEVEN ZEITCHIK
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LOS ANGELES — When veteran filmmaker Roland Emmerich was first offered the chance to direct a movie about terrorists taking over the White House, he couldn't believe his luck. "It's such a good idea," Emmerich, the money-minting director of movies such as "2012," said last week at a Culver City editing facility, where he has been holed up polishing his new film, "White House Down." "I was surprised no one had done it before."

It turns out someone has. Just before Emmerich's movie, about a wannabe Secret Service agent with a Messiah complex who serendipitously ends up at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. during a fiery terrorist attack, will come out June 28. That's barely three months after the release Friday of Antoine Fuqua's "Olympus Has Fallen" — about a wannabe Secret Service agent with a Messiah complex who serendipitously ends up at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. during a fiery terrorist attack.

"Olympus" and "White House" provide the latest and in some ways strangest example of what happens when a pair of film-industry heavyweights decide to stubbornly stay the course. They also demonstrate how, more than a decade after 9/11, Hollywood is eager to get back to doing what it does best — taking famous landmarks and blowing them to smithereens.

The question is: How much of that destruction will Americans want to see?

The film business likes to avoid movies with similar premises. History shows they can be disastrous.

In 2004, Oliver Stone's "Alexander" bombed six months after "Troy," another ancient epic. In 2006 the Truman Capote biopic "Infamous" failed to gain any traction after the success the previous year of "Capote." Last spring, "Mirror Mirror," the first of competing two Snow White movies, sputtered as audiences waited to see the second movie, the darker-toned "Snow White and the Huntsman," two months later.

The White House films have even more in common than many of these movies. Perhaps not since the natural-disaster pictures "Armageddon" and "Deep Impact" 15 years ago — Hollywood's quintessential case of accidental twins — have a pair of movies so close in tone, plot and symbolism hit theaters in such quick succession.

While both "Armageddon" and "Deep Impact" were successful, they were released in an era before realms such as cable drama and Internet video had come into their own. Those movies also didn't share an iconic building as a key selling point.

"If all they have in common is a generic concept, two movies in the same season can work. But if they're similar in their specifics, it could be a problem, especially for the second film," said Bruce Nash, a film-industry expert who runs the box office website the Numbers. "The White House movies would seem to be much closer to that second category."

How did it happen? Basically because of a high-stakes game of Hollywood chicken. It began last April, when Sony bought the "White House Down" script and hired Emmerich to direct, setting up a battle with the existing "Olympus" project, which was financed by Millennium Entertainment and had already retained Gerard Butler as the agent.

Millennium responded by hiring director Fuqua, best known for "Training Day," and moving up the production, which would also star Aaron Eckhart as the president, from September to July. It felt secure in its position, according to a person involved in the film who wasn't authorized to talk about it publicly, because "White House" had no cast yet, and big studio projects with no cast can languish for years.

But Sony caught Millennium off-guard by quickly announcing that it had cast Channing Tatum as the president and then in August saying that it was pushing up its release date from November 2013 to this June.

Not to be outdone, FilmDistrict, which came aboard several months later to distribute "Olympus," announced that it would bring out its movie in April, then rescheduled it a month earlier.

televisionWeek

Local Listings For The Week Of March 23-29, 2013

SATURDAY PRIMETIME/LATE NIGHT													MARCH 23, 2013										
BROADCAST STATIONS	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	
PBS KUSD 2 8 (2)	Super Brain With Dr. Rudy Tanzi Maximizing the brain's potential. (In Stereo) 36																						
KTIV 4 4 (2)	PGA Tour Golf																						
NBC KDLT 5 5 (3)	PGA Tour Golf Arnold Palmer Invitational, Third Round. From Bay Hill Club & Lodge in Orlando, Fla. (N) (In Stereo Live) 36																						
KCAU 6 6 (3)	Winter X Games From Tignes, France. (Taped) 36																						
CBS KELO 11 3 (11)	2013 NCAA Basketball Tournament																						
ABC KSFY 13 7 (13)	Winter X Games From Tignes, France. (Taped) 36																						
KMEG 13 13 (6)	2013 NCAA Basketball Tournament																						
FOX KTTW 21 9 (7)	2013 NCAA Basketball Tournament																						
KLKN 2013 NCAA Basketball Tournament																							
KOLN 2013 NCAA Basketball Tournament																							
KPTH "Passion Play" 97																							
KSCB 97	Travel Joni																						
KSIN 99 (12)	Quilting Sew It All																						
KXNE 8 (8)	Best of NET																						
HBO 17 (40)	*** "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows" (2011) Robert Downey Jr. 36																						
HBO2	*** "Extremely Loud" (2012) Taylor Kitsch. 36																						
MAX 420	*** "Volcano 1997" (In Stereo) 36																						
MAX2	*** "Your Highness" (2011) (In Stereo) 36																						
SHOW 18 (435)	*** "Chicago" (2002, Musical) 36																						
SHOW2	Broken "Peace, Love" 36																						
TMC	"The Understudy" (2011) 36																						
A&E 57 (41)	*** "Casino" (1995) Robert De Niro. 36																						
AMC 41 (54)	*** "Once Upon" (2012) 36																						
ANPL 19 (43)	Tanked 36																						
BRAVO 25 (55)	Housewives/Atl. 36																						
CMTV 38 (77)	Reba 36																						
CNBC 53 (52)	Sub-D 36																						
CNN 33 (49)	Newsr'm Gupta 36																						
COM 45 (61)	*** "Year One" (2009) 36																						
CSPAN 49 (17)	Washington This Week 36																						
DISC 34 (44)	Yukon Men 36																						
DISN 64 (36)	Austin Austin 36																						
DISXD 65 (88)	Crash Kickin' It 36																						
EITV 51 (62)	Kourtney-Kim 36																						
ENC 480	*** "Striking Distance" (1993) 36																						
ESPN 28 (24)	Poker NASCAR 36																						
ESPN2 29 (25)	Women's College Basketball 36																						
EWTN 74 (65)	World Night Prime 36																						
FAM 62 (40)	*** "Drumline" (2002) Nick Cannon, Zoe Saldana. 36																						
FX 53 (58)	*** "What Happens in Vegas" (2008) 36																						
FXNWS 50 (48)	America's News Headquarters (N) 36																						
FOXSP 35 (27)	Twins Awards 36																						
GOLF 55 (30)	PGA Tour Golf 36																						
HALL 22 (33)	*** "Flicka" (2006) 36																						
HGTV 54 (34)	You Live in What? 36																						
HIST 46 (47)	Inventions 36																						
KAUN 15 (22)	Campbell Hopalong 36																						
KWSD 12 (14)	Rifleman 36																						
LIFE 58 (29)	"The Hunt for the I-5 Killer" (2011) 36																						
MSNBC 66 (30)	MSNBC Live (N) 36																						
NICK 32 (37)	Sponge. 36																						
RFDTV 38 (1)	Auction Original N-Bar 36																						
SOAP 120	Gilmore Girls 36																						
SPEED 63 (28)	NASCAR 36																						
SPIKE 30 (60)	Scarface 36																						
STARZ	"Men in Black 3" 36																						
SYFY 44 (46)	"Carny" (2009) 36																						
TBS 36 (57)	Big Bang 36																						
TCM 76 (53)	"Monte Walsh" (1940) 36																						
TLC 43 (45)	48 Hours: Hard Evid. 36																						
TNT 37 (59)	Adven 36																						
TOON 42 (38)	Street Eats 36																						
TRAV 24 (42)	Storage 36																						
TRUTV 52 (63)	Diners 36																						
TVFN 56 (31)	Rose. 36																						
TVLND 47 (39)	Rose. 36																						
UNI 69	El Chavo Animado 36																						
USA 31 (58)	NCIS 36																						
VH1 39 (76)	Wicked Single 36																						
WE 30	Wedding-Unv. 36																						
WGN 16 (18)	MLB Preseason Baseball: Angels at Cubs 36																						

SUNDAY PRIMETIME/LATE NIGHT													MARCH 24, 2013					
BROADCAST STATIONS</																		