



The Main Feature

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Baby Driver

US 2017
113 mins Certificate 15

Written & Directed by	Edgar Wright
Music	Steven Price
Cinematography	Bill Pope
Film Editing	Jonathan Amos
Stunt co-ordinator	Darrin Prescott
Choreography	Ryan Heffington

Cast

Ansel Elgort	Baby
Lily James	Debora
CJ Jones	Joseph
Kevin Spacey	Doc
Jon Hamm	Buddy
Eiza González	Darling
Jamie Foxx	Bats



Baby Driver is a loud, kinetic heist movie, fuelled by a vibrant largely retro soundtrack, with meticulously crafted and stylish “on-camera” stunts (so minimal computer special effects), and winning performances especially from Elgort and Spacey.

Ansel Elgort plays Baby, an on-call criminal getaway driver in Atlanta. Quiet and introspective, he is more comfortable with torque than talk. Flashbacks reveal that as a child he survived a car crash, which killed his argumentative parents. He listens continuously to music on his range of iPods to give him inspiration and overcome his tinnitus, miming along to the tracks while undertaking breath-taking stunts. It is doubtful that he has ever studied the Highway Code.

He ferries different crews of robbers assembled by Doc, a criminal kingpin played with deadpan menace by Kevin Spacey, to pay off a debt he incurred when he stole Doc’s loot-laden car. Between jobs, Baby remixes snippets of conversations he records and cares for his mute foster father Joseph (CJ Jones). Just when he thinks he has finally repaid Doc and is free to forge a new life with his waitress girlfriend, Debora (Lily James), Doc forces him back for another job. The assembled gang consists of laidback Buddy, an ex-Wall Street banker with a drug habit (John Hamm); his vivacious, sharpshooter partner Darling (Eiza González) and trigger-happy, sadist henchman Bats (Jamie Foxx), who takes an instant dislike to Baby. The robbery at the main Atlanta Post Office goes seriously awry, and Baby has to face the music.



The writer-director (Edgar Wright) is well known for the Channel 4 sitcom *Spaced*; the so-called Cornetto Trilogy of UK-based films with Simon Pegg and Nick Frost (*Shaun of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz*, *The World's End*), and for *Scott Pilgrim vs the World*. His signature style is fast-paced and satirical, with expressive popular music, nerdy film references, rapid-fire editing and cartoon-like mayhem – all much in evidence in tonight's film. He started to work on *Baby Driver* in 1995, but didn't

finish the script until 2011 and the film 6 years later.

As usual, the prospective and final cast were very different, with Michael Douglas originally considered for the Kevin Spacey role, John Boyega replaced by Ansel Elgort, and Emma Stone eventually yielding to Esher's own Lily James. Likewise, Los Angeles was to have been the original setting, but prohibitively expensive production costs there made shooting impractical and Atlanta won out (not least as it offered generous transferable tax credits for film production).

The soundtrack includes Beck, T. Rex, Martha and the Vandellas, Bob and Earl, Blur, The Damned, Young MC, Queen and (over the closing credits) Simon & Garfunkel.



The film was generally well-received by reviewers and audiences for its craftsmanship and style, though the characterisation and screenwriting drew occasional criticism. It was selected by the National Board of Review for their annual top ten films list for 2017.

British movie reviewers were impressed, with 5-star reviews from *The Times* ("an adrenaline rush, a motor musical on iPod shuffle"), *The Guardian* ("terrifically stylish and exciting...funny and engaging, packed with sheer brio and good nature") and *Empire Magazine*

("one of the most utterly original films in years...it's as close to a car-chase opera as you'll ever see on screen").

The film was nominated for numerous awards, including three Oscars, two BAFTAs (with a deserved win for Editing), two Critics' Choice Awards (again, with a win for Editing), and a Golden Globe Award, and won several other honours, chiefly for technical achievement.

Edgar Wright has recently released "*The Sparks Brothers*", a documentary about the eponymous pop group's 25-album long career and is readying his psychological thriller, "*Last Night in Soho*" with Anya Taylor-Joy ("*Queen's Gambit*") for a late autumn release in the UK. He has also confirmed that he has written a sequel to *Baby Driver* – it will need considerable horsepower to match the original.

Drive Safely!

Eugene Smith



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Eugene Smith chooses four more famous heist movies

Extract from Entertainment Weekly (US Culture Magazine) 28th June 2017

The Lavender Hill Mob (1951)

This wry British comedy follows shy and unassuming bank clerk Holland (Alec Guinness) as he decides to steal the gold bullion he is entrusted with watching over. When he meets his new neighbour Pendlebury (Stanley Holloway) they hatch a plan to smuggle the stolen gold out of the country as souvenir Eiffel Tower paperweights. Hijinks ensue when two bumbling crooks are brought on to assist with the



robbery and schoolgirls mistakenly purchase the solid gold miniature Eiffel Towers. Shot on location in London, it earned Alec Guinness his first Academy Award nomination. Producers Ealing Studios were famous for their dry and dark comedies, and this is one of their finest entries. A wild car chase, sight gags, and dizzying trick shots inject it with the necessary energy of a heist thriller. You can spot a very young Audrey Hepburn in one of her first film roles as a South American cigarette girl with one line in the opening scene.

Rififi (1955)

Considered the gold standard, Rififi has influenced and inspired nearly every heist film that's come since. Its centrepiece, the robbery of a jewellery store, takes up a quarter of the film's running time (it was only 10 pages in the 250 page novel the film was based on).



Nearly completely silent, featuring only natural sound and no music or dialogue, the 32-minute heist scene is meticulous and unsettling; its lack of sound heightening the tension to an almost excruciating level. The robbery is so well executed some real life thieves have supposedly used it as a guide for their own crimes. The word "rififi" is French slang for a machismo or show of force found in the criminal underbelly of Paris. Written and directed by blacklisted American expat Jules Dassin while he was living in France, the film injected the gritty realism and avant-garde techniques of the French New Wave into the American crime film. While the thieves pull off the job flawlessly, their own human foibles ultimately prove their undoing. Dassin is a triple threat in the film, appearing as Italian safecracker Cesar, in addition to his writing and directing duties. He went on to win Best Director that year at the Cannes Film Festival at a time when he was nearly destitute having had to flee the U.S. in the wake of the [Communist] Blacklist. Many believe a murder in the film when one of the thieves betray their code of silence was a direct jab at those who had named names to the House of Un-American Activities Committee, destroying careers and lives in the process.

The Killing (1956)

Heavily influenced by The Asphalt Jungle, The Killing tells the tale of a band of desperate men who come together to stage an elaborate racetrack heist. Each one has his reasons for his involvement – from a veteran criminal (Sterling Hayden) who wants one

last score before he goes straight and

settles down to a corrupt cop (Ted de Corsia), to a bartender (Joe Sawyer) who needs money for his wife's medical bills, to a betting window teller (Elisha Cook, Jr.) afraid his wife will abandon him if he doesn't bring in some cash. As with so many films, the heist goes well but avarice and the fickle hand of fate



trip them up in the end. This was director Stanley Kubrick's third feature, but it was the first to put him on the map as a force to be reckoned with in Hollywood. Kubrick said of his approach to the film, "In a crime film, it is almost like a bullfight; it has a ritual and a pattern." The film used its low-budget limitations to craft a thriller that drips with realism and urgency, and it makes expert use of the technique of shifting points-of-view to retell the story from multiple perspectives. Its non-linear storytelling has inspired generations of filmmakers, most particularly Quentin Tarantino. Kirk Douglas was so impressed with the film that he recruited Kubrick to direct his next film Paths of Glory (1957).

The Italian Job (1969)

Edgar Wright cited this comic caper as a direct influence on Baby Driver. The Italian Job (remade in 2003) was a delightfully dippy product of its time, revelling in its ability to turn the heist into



farce and featuring a distinctly groovy, 1960s atmosphere. A young Michael

Caine stars as Charlie Croker, a lothario and criminal mastermind who plots to steal a gold

shipment by using a traffic jam in the streets of Turin as a distraction. Noel Coward makes his final cinematic appearance as crime boss, Mr. Bridger, running the operation from inside prison. More style than substance, this film offered a knowing, tongue-in-cheek alternative to the suave charms of the James Bond franchise, aided by a groovy Quincy Jones soundtrack. The film's car chases and use of a trio of red, white, and blue mini-Coopers have become so entrenched in British culture that it and Caine's famous one-liner ("You were only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!") were featured in the 2012 Olympics closing ceremony. Ultimately, the film revels more in its car chases and visual tomfoolery than the actual heist itself, even leaving viewers with a literal cliffhanger of an ending.

Comments and reactions to: **Parasite**

No of reaction slips received = 14

Average score = 7.07

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	~	~	~	1	~	~	3	4	5	~	1

Upstairs Downstairs on acid!

Amazing how the 'poor' so easily adapted to the 'rich' – then disaster ...

Enjoyed it. The ending was a non-ending – what next?

A beguiling mixture of the farcical and the macabre

Any peaches instead of cake at the interval?

Position	Film	Average score
1	Nomadland	7.13
2	Parasite	7.07

Forthcoming attraction: 14 October 2021 – **Permission**



In 2015, Niloufar Ardalan was captain of the Iranian women's indoor football team, which had just reached the Asian Championships final in Malaysia. Incredibly, she was prevented from playing, because her TV presenter husband would not give her the permission to travel abroad that married women in Iran legally need. A fictionalised version of this extraordinary situation, Permission is the debut feature from Iranian dramatist and film-maker Soheil Beiraghi. StoryHouse