

The Guard

Ireland 2011

Directed by

John Michael McDonagh

Written by

John Michael McDonagh

Cinematography

Larry Smith

Original Music

Calexico

Cast*Brendan Gleeson*

Sergeant Gerry Boyle

Don Cheadle

FBI agent Wendell Everett

Mark Strong

Clive Cornell

Liam Cunningham

Francis Sheehy-

Skelfington

96 min

*Our next screening...***Sightseers (UK)**

Tue 30 April 2013

Dir: Ben Wheatley

A dream caravan holiday
takes a wrong turn!

Regulars at WFS screenings may have noted that we regularly use reviews from veteran American film critic Roger Ebert. So it was with great sadness that we learned of his passing a couple of weeks ago. Once again we've used one of his reviews tonight, and this enjoyable film seems a fitting way to honour his contribution. More info at rogerebert.com

Debut writer-director John McDonagh shows he's a chip off the old Irish block (his brother Martin masterminded *In Bruges*) with this fast and funny comedy centred around Brendan Gleeson's corrupt cop. A drily vicious script peppered with offensive barbs ("racism is part of the Irish culture") propel what is a sort of Irish *Hot Fuzz* along at a fair old lick with both Gleeson and Cheadle given space to display their considerable comic timing. Gleeson, in particular, shows how wasted he is with his paper-thin Harry Potter role, almost visibly relishing the chance here to play an outwardly selfish wastrel who's actually quite a decent cove beneath all the blarney and bluster. Assured and well-written, it may totter uncertainly in the third act but it's a pleasure to listen to a script with such an ear for shocking insult and knowing offence.

Tim Evans, Sky Movies

As an actor, Brendan Gleeson is a fact of life. Tall, shaggy, not thin, he demonstrates that it takes a heap o'living to make a body a character. Cast him in a role, and the plot and dialogue become adornments. In *The Guard*, he is paired with the equally effective actor Don Cheadle, who could not be more different, and that is the point. The movie has been written and directed by John Michael McDonagh, whose brother made such good use of Gleeson in *In Bruges* (2008). His fundamentals are formulas: good cop/bad cop, fish out of water, odd couple. He leavens these familiar forms with an enchanting Irishness in which visitors at times suspect they are the butt of an unexpressed joke. As my friend McHugh explained to me as I entered my first pub in Sligo: "When they're not looking at you, they're studying you out of the corners of their eyes. And when they're not listening to you, they're not missing a word." McDonagh makes little mystery of the identity of the big-time drug dealers. His dialogue, sly and delightful, allows the guarda and the FBI agent to begin to trust each other while evading cloying cliches. The local color is flawless; I especially liked the curious boy on the bicycle who seems to be ubiquitous and who is treated by Gleeson not as a lost child but as a useful informer.

Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times