

October Preview

Captain Phillips

Director: Paul Greengrass
Starring: Tom Hanks, Catherine Keener
Running time: 134 mins
Released nationwide on October 18th

The true story of the 2009 capture of an unarmed US cargo ship by Somali pirates was aching to be told on the big screen, and *Captain Phillips* arrives just four years after the real-life incident, with multi-Oscar winner Tom Hanks in the lead and director Paul Greengrass on megaphone duties.

Greengrass - along with *Hunger Games* and *State Of Play* scriptwriter Billy Ray - attacks the very contemporary issue of the threat of piracy on international shipping, as well as its effect on the individuals working within the industry, bringing into sharp relief Captain Richard Phillips's own memoir, an account of the events of 2009 entitled *A Captain's Duty: Somali Pirates, Navy SEALs and Dangerous Days At Sea*. His experiences, along with the impact his disappearance had on his loving family, are documented throughout the five day capture, which took place 240 miles off the coast of Somalia - the first successful seizure of a ship registered under the American flag since the 19th century.

Due to an undoubtedly strategic autumn release timed for awards season, Hanks could be hot on the heels of his next Oscar should he do the Captain's heroic story justice, while Greengrass's work has often generated critical acclaim via thrillers like *The Bourne Ultimatum* and *Green Zone*. His films

usually feature a number of hot button political issues, most notably his depiction of 'the other' hijacked plane on September 11th in the controversial film *United 93*, indicating his competency in handling sensitive events such as those in Somalia and his ability to translate them onto the silver screen.

Greengrass's experience in enthraling a cinematic audience with blockbuster action thrillers may indicate that he's well practiced in delivering edge-of-your-seat drama, yet the audience's ability to obtain the plot prior to viewing the film - through Captain Phillips's own memoirs and the headlines generated by the ongoing Somali civil war - generates a necessity for both authenticity and sensitivity to the social issues Greengrass is attempting to explore. Put simply, this story requires more than a few plot twists in order to honour its transition into a cinematic medium and keep the audience interested.

Nevertheless, the combination of Hanks and Greengrass within one project should make for a thriller well worth watching, as well as the opportunity to tell an important and very modern political story.

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