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Kids' movies can be enjoyable for both children and parents alike; animation is a medium with a lot of freedom to give its characters personality and tell creative stories. However, the 2012 animated feature film *Sir Billi* doesn't exactly give animated feature films a good name. With lackluster animation, strange character design, offensive moments, questionable jokes, and a nearly nonsensical storyline, *Sir Billi* is just another standard low-budget animated movie from the early 2010s that would be forgettable if it weren't so darn weird. What makes it even weirder is that, somehow, *Sir Billi* was able to hire **Sean Connery** for the lead voice acting role.

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The Meandering Plot of 'Sir Billi'



The film follows animal rescuer Billi Sedgewick as he races to rescue Bessie Boo the beaver (**Valentina Tessie Hartmann**) as she careens down a raging river toward the dam and certain death. Another layer of urgency comes in the form of beaver catcher McKenzie (**Ford Kiernan**), who has spent the past five years tracking Bessie down. The government has declared beavers to be illegal in Scotland, so they are to be removed to Norway. Bessie escaped due to a car accident and has been living in the small village of Catterness in secret. It's up to Billi, his partner Gordon the Goat (**Alan Cumming**), who thinks he's a dog, and the humans and animals in the village to rescue Bessie from the river and from the evil McKenzie, who, for some reason, flip-flops between feeling pity for the beavers and wanting to ... eat them? It's all very confusing.

Unfortunately, there isn't much character development when it comes to Billi, Gordon, Bessi, McKenzie, or any of the other characters. There isn't much of a sense of movement in terms of plot either, considering the first half of the film is set-up and the second half is one nonstop action sequence. There are a couple bits of the usual senarce you'd find in a film, like the sidekick and the love interest, but Gordon as a sidekick rate a fake



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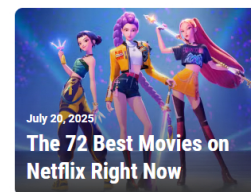
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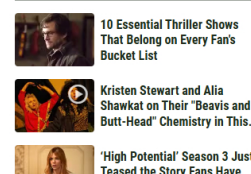


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usual aspects you'd find in a film, like the stunner and the love interest, but Gordon as a stunner gets a rare out death scene with no buildup or emotional resonance, and the love interest, Toni Turner (**Amy Sacco**), gets an abysmally small amount of screen time. There are moments that could have been connected to a complete story, but for the most part the plot is both overly simple and somewhat nonsensical.

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'Sir Billi's Odd Choices Leave Viewers Scratching Their Heads



There's usually something positive to say about any film, and *Sir Billi* made a few choices that worked. For example, the character Patti Turner (**Ruby Wax**) is arguably the best part of the movie; against all odds, her voice performance comes off as natural and funny. But there's also a lot of confusing details in *Sir Billi*, which overshadow the film's potential.

Even before getting into the main plot or being introduced to any characters, the film starts off with stylized opening credits à la **James Bond movies**. However, the reference veers into the realm of disturbingly odd, due to the low-budget animation, the slow motion silhouettes, and the eerie song. The combination of these aspects just comes off as strange, and it's an unfortunate way to start the movie.

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The worldbuilding of the film is also just plain confusing. The animals in the movie are sentient and can communicate with humans, allowing them to cohabitate with the human population of the village. This wouldn't be such a strange decision if there aren't also animals that don't speak and are used like regular farm animals. Sir Billi's cow, for instance, doesn't seem intelligent at all. Are all cows non-intelligent in this world? Likewise, Billi's rescue mission partner, Gordon, is an intelligent goat, but he behaves far more like a dog. The flashback that occurs when Sir Billi is worried that Gordon might be dead shows that Billi seems to have rehabilitated him. This begs the question: are the intelligent animals able to talk with humans because they've been rescued by Sir Billi? There's no answer.

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Despite Billi being the protagonist and the village's go-to guy when there's a crisis, Gordon ends up doing most of the work to save Bessie, along with the teamwork of the villagers. Billi does make the final save at the end, but he spends most of the previous scenes giving orders (as a leader should) and threatening to beat people up (a weird way to try and prove himself) for some reason. Sir Billi is always ready for a fight.

There are plenty of smaller weird choices: Sir Billi's final chase scene consists of him, an elderly grandfather, skateboarding to catch up to McKenzie, who's driving a car; the plane pilot Victoria (**Regina Reagan**), who is also a duck; Bessie's adopted mother is almost paralyzed in a scene that's so ridiculously serious that it teeters on the edge of melodrama; the list goes on. The viewer learns pretty quickly to stop questioning the things that happen and just accept the oddness. The film isn't even a **"so bad it's good" type of watch**. It's just ... bad.

How Sean Connery Became the Voice of Sir Billi



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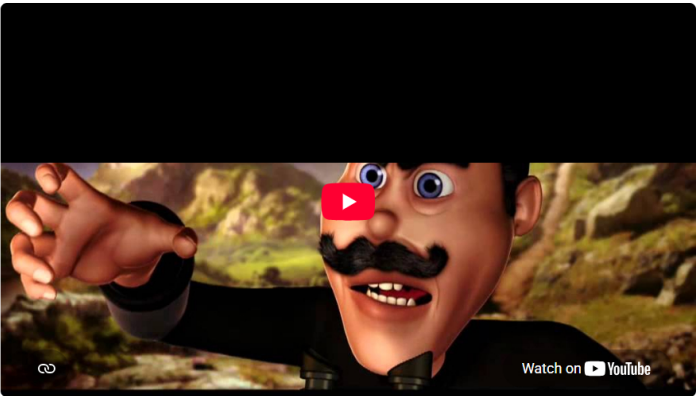
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After a long and impressive acting career, Sean Connery retired in 2006. Eight years later, he came out of retirement to voice the leading role in Sir Billi, of all films. Why come out of retirement for a low-budget computer animated movie with a confusing plot and numerous questionable story decisions?

One possible reason would be the film's obvious Scottish pride. The filmmakers clearly also admired the highlights of Connery's film career enough to include several out-of-place references to James Bond, *The Hunt for Red October*, and *Indiana Jones*. The strongest reason, though, may be due to friendly ties, as the filmmakers **Sascha and Tessa Hartmann** (Tessa herself wrote the script) knew a friend of Connery's who **placed the script in his hands**. One way or the other, it's a shame that the legendary Sean Connery's final film was *Sir Billi*.

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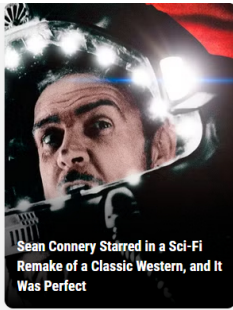
Look, they can't all be winners. (In fact, *Sir Billi* received a 0% on Rotten Tomatoes.) At the very least, *Sir Billi* leaves the viewers with plenty of questions. While it's not a good movie by any means, it still managed to become Sean Connery's final movie, and it will always go down in history for that—as well as for being one of the film industry's strangest projects.



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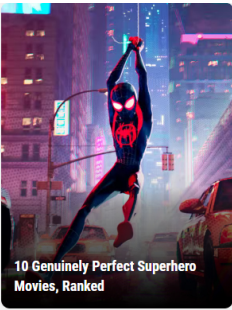
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