

Thriller presents new heroine



BY KEN DUSOLD
Assistant Editor

With the recent release of "Colombiana," an interesting issue concerning the film industry arises: a lack of strong female characters in action-thrillers. There are several notable butt-kicking heroines.

Sigourney Weaver's turn as Ripley in the "Alien" series ranks as one of the greatest action heroes of all time. Linda Hamilton's performance as Sarah Connor gives Arnold Schwarzenegger a run for his money in the "Terminator" franchise and Anne Parillaud is an assassin with whom you do not want to mess in director Luc Besson's "La Femme Nikita." This remains an area in which filmmakers could improve.

Enter Besson, again. As a screenwriter and producer this time, he introduces us to Cataleya in "Colombiana." Born the daughter of an assassin working for a notorious and powerful Colombian drug lord, Cataleya (Zoe Saldana) witnessed the murder of her parents at a young age.

She flees to the United States and into the loving arms of her uncle (Cliff Curtis) and grandmother (Ofelia Medina), having escaped death at the hands of her parents' murderers. Emotionally distraught and angered by her loss, Cataleya promises to seek revenge. To do so, she spends her adolescence training to become an assassin.

The first 20 minutes of "Colombiana," where we learn Cataleya's back-story, is beautifully told. Director Oliver Megaton decided to introduce us to Cataleya as a girl in 1992 Bogota, Colombia. This opening act is imperative to understanding the woman we spend the following 90 minutes, in addition to understanding the plot.

One cannot properly fathom the mindset of this character without first visualizing her history. We follow her from the slaying of her parents to the beginning of her education as a budding assassin. The time that lapses between these points includes an expertly filmed foot

chase through the slums of Bogota and insight into Cataleya's skills evading authorities even as a child.

Megaton could have taken the cheap way out and used flashbacks throughout the story to give us the information leading to her present day circumstances as a lethal killer. He simply could have told us of her past through expository dialogue, but Megaton didn't to skip. The payoff is monumental to the film's success as an intriguing thriller.

When we finally meet the adult version of Cataleya, we are ready to join in the quest to avenge her fallen family. Of course, there is a take-no-prisoners policy associated with this mission, so all the bad guys have to die.

The cat-and-mouse game with the FBI carefully must be observed and controlled — Cataleya must have the upper hand in every situation. In fact, her ability to lead authorities on continuous snipe hunts threatens to hurt the picture's integrity as a well-made action film at times.

Running from police and blowing up building walls with powerful weaponry while wearing only one's skivvies borders on ridiculous. Then again, this only happens once and fellow movie heroine Ripley fought an extra-terrestrial monster in her underwear near the end of "Alien," so I can forgive this slight misstep.

Saldana and Amandla Stenberg (as the young Cataleya) shine equally bright in the lead role. Saldana was put through rigorous training to prepare for the chance to play the physically elite, experienced fighter, according to Saldana at the Colombian press conference.

Her skills physically are matched only by her visceral performance. Managing to exude Cataleya's unitary purpose and tightly-capped labyrinth of emotion, Saldana gives a glimpse into what could be a truly inspiring acting career.

For her part, Stenberg is responsible for the connection between the audience and the character. Her stoic look, determined spirit and eventual — but singular —



Photo courtesy of rottentomatoes.com
Zoe Saldana plays a female assassin avenging her parents' murder in the new action thriller Colombiana.

breakdown capture the spirit of young Cataleya arguably better than Saldana captures the matured conception of the character. Like Hailee Steinfeld in 2010's "True Grit," Stenberg properly secures her place as co-lead in the film with her advanced understanding of the character.

Like many action-films before it, "Colombiana" is guilty of suggesting impossible human capabilities

in its lead. It also suffers from underdeveloped characters, Curtis as the uncle, one-dimensional characters, Jordi Mollà as Marco, and an unsatisfying finish. Notwithstanding what are comparatively minor faults, "Colombiana" is a smoothly paced mix of high-octane action, an assassin's personal recital with revenge and an introduction to the action genre's newest female protagonist.

Facebook Swap Shop provides treasures

BY ALEX CARLSON
Staff Reporter

From garage sales to Internet auctions, the world of thrift knows no limits. Each town has a community of deals and bargains, and Kirksville has found a new avenue for dodging high prices.

Kirksville Swap Shop, a new Facebook group, gives regional residents the chance to post about items for sale or look for new deals others have posted. Members can invite others to the group and it is

free to post.

Truman State senior Christine Trucke joined the Swap Shop after being invited by her friends found the variety of items on the Swap Shop were worth exploring.

"It's pretty neat when you're looking for something specific," Trucke said. "There's usually a bit of everything like furniture, clothes, cars, phones, electronics, a little bit of everything."

For local deals, the Swap Shop has found fans in both frugal buyers of everyday items and treasure hunters looking for rare gems.

Although buying items is a large part of the Swap Shop, some users have made the site their go-to place for selling personal items. Freshman Whitney Jackson sells items like video game systems on the website to earn money for college.

The Swap Shop isn't only about finding a deal on common items. Kirksville resident Alisha May discovered a rarity on the Swap Shop group's Facebook page, a grey and white kitten that was looking for a new home. May was not charged for the new pet.

Even if the goal isn't to make a

profit through selling items, local users have found many of the deals and bargains too easy to resist.

The Facebook group is comparable to other more common websites for buying and selling items. While the national sites feature similar functions and ranges of interest like the Swap Shop, some who have used the Kirksville Swap Shop have found the Facebook page to have significant advantages over other sites.

"I think it's a little more accessible," Trucke said. "Everyone can see your stuff in pictures and can

comment on it through Facebook."

The group conveniently is integrated into Facebook, so users who visit the website don't have to stray from their social network to explore local deals in Kirksville.

"You can search Craigslist, but you're usually on Facebook more, so it's more convenient to use this in Facebook," Jackson said.

With over 5,200 members and dozens of updates a day, the Kirksville Swap Shop on Facebook is bringing many residents the low prices they want at the convenience they enjoy.

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Ekklesia Campus Ministry & the Kirksville Church of Christ Welcome You!

"Ekklesia" is the Greek word for "church" and describes our non-denominational campus outreach. We have a campus house at 1405 S. Florence, just across from the football stadium. Truman students and church members Landon Anderson, Adam Priest, and Cole Poyner live at the house. Emily Mahnken is coordinating some mixers for us. Many events are also scheduled at the church building, 110 Pfeiffer Ave. Catch the Ekklesia Campus Bus for transportation by calling 1-800-548-7074

Calendar of Events

- Sept. 1 - Thurs. Watermelon Tail Gate Party @ Campus House @ 7 PM
- Sept. 4 - 10 AM College Class at Church. Truman student Landon Anderson speaks at 11 AM. Noon Fellowship Meal. Thousand Hills Camp Out (weather permitting). Make your reservation.
- Sept. 5 - Free Mon. Labor Day Brunch @ Lake @ Enclosed Shelter, Thousand Hills State Park, 10 AM to Noon
- Sept. 5 - Mon. Ekklesia Devotional @ Campus House @ 9 PM
- Sept. 10 - Tail Gate Party @ Campus House @ Noon, Hamburgers
- Sept. 11 - Sun. at Church, Dr. Michael Houts, NASA Scientist, "Evolution Is Religion not Science" 10 AM, 11 AM & 6 PM, Dan's Dogs Free BBQ Sun. evening @ church Observatory @ 9 PM (Weather permitting)
- Sept. 12 - Mon. Dr. Houts, Georgian Room C, SUB, 7 PM
- Sept. 17 - Sat. Icy Treats Tailgate @ Campus House @ 7 PM
- Sept. 18 - Sun. at Church, Johnnie LeMaster, SF Giants Shortstop, 11 AM "Box Score" Sun. 5 PM Brick Mall under Tent @ Truman, Free Hot dogs (rain location BH Little Theatre)

Ekklesia Campus House
1405 S. Florence
1-800-548-7074
<http://ekkleisia.truman.edu>