

# ENTRAPMENT

Directed by John Amiel  
Produced by Sean Connery, Michael Hertzberg, and Rhonda Tollefson  
Distributed by Twentieth Century-Fox  
Released in 1999

In the 1990s Sean Connery finally overcame the glorious burden of epitomizing James Bond to the world. Suddenly he wasn't James Bond to his millions of fans but Sean Connery. Maybe enough time had passed since the first Bond films, or maybe Connery got so old he just stopped looking like James Bond. The beard certainly helped.

While his fans didn't care that their star was 69 years old in 1999, they certainly didn't want to see an actress of similar vintage sharing the silver screen with their silver-haired doyen. That's why we got, instead, the comely 29-year-old Catherine Zeta-Jones, fresh from her breakout role in *The Mask of Zorro*.

As necessity is the mother of invention, the dictates of casting should have inspired the filmmakers behind *Entrapment* to find a fresh way through their formulaic plot. Instead they tried to modify a conventional bickering-odd-couple-transcend-sexual-tension-for-common-cause structure. Now, this tactic worked well in *Charade*. There, Cary Grant decided that a man of his age (Grant was 59) should not be putting the moves on Audrey Hepburn, so their roles were reversed, making the young woman the romantic aggressor.

That's what we have in *Entrapment*, a bickering odd couple warming up to each other, the man acting fatherly, the woman alternately coquettish and worshipful. This worked better in *Charade* since that movie was more light-hearted. Though *Charade* does boast a more mature, intricate plot, it is ultimately a fun movie. *Entrapment* languishes in protracted training-and-intrigue time at Mack's castle and in broke-down Kuala Lumpur. The film is loaded with shots of Connery wistfully reflecting on Zeta-Jones's shapely derriere, wondering what he was doing all those years wasting his time chasing paintings rather than skirts.

The film has great promise but suffers from a mechanical plot that allows nonsensical set pieces to diminish the characters, who are resigned to their station like a hamster on an exercise wheel. For example, we learn from Virginia's dedication to master the difficult laser maze that she is a determined, athletic thief. Her preternatural dominion over her surroundings (and contorted, tightly-clad body) earns the begrudging respect of Mack. But why emphasize the difficulty of getting to the mask undetected by the lasers only to permit Virginia to get out of the same room five times faster than she got in? Also, while it is believable that these two master criminals could procure all the equipment for these jobs, their task is still impossible. When they reach the vault on New Year's Eve, Virginia uses a brush and some powder to reveal where on the numeric vault code screen the chairman has left his fingerprints. That's fine, presuming the chairman never hit the wrong digit, but there's no way they would know the proper sequence of the numbers to punch in.

When it's over there's no denying that *Entrapment* has dazzled its audience. But what of Mack and Virginia? They're together, but to do what? A romantic entanglement seems awkward. Will he become her new de facto dad? It would be so much better if he were twenty

years younger. They seem destined not to live happily ever after, but to be suspended in limbo, forever committing ingenious crimes in a vain attempt to forestall death and relieve sexual tension.

If the filmmakers had put the story first, and the casting second, *Entrapment* could have been an exciting, engrossing bit of escapism. Sadly it's all question marks and too few exclamation points.