Written by Kam Williams , DVD Review
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One sign that scriptwriters have run out of fresh ideas is when they lazily recycle the shopworn, time-travel theme in order to extend an expiring film series. This ill-advised approach has been employed over the years in service of such sorry sequels as "The Three Stooges Meet Hercules" (1962), "Escape from the Planet of the Apes" (1971), "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home" (1986) and "Beastmaster 2: Through the Portal of Time" (1991), to name a few.

Even "Back to the Future III" (1990) doubled-down on the dubious cinematic device when it had Michael J. Fox teleported back to the Wild, Wild West instead of to the Fifties like the earlier installments. Industry insiders use the Happy Days-inspired catchphrase “Jumping the Shark” to mark the moment a farfetched episode plunges a franchise headlong into an irreversible tailspin.

Fortunately, the relatively-captivating Men in Black III is more than just another, idea-bereft take-the-money-and-run rip-off. Directed by Barry Sonnenfeld (MIB & MIB II), the picture reunites Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones as alien-hunting Agents J and K, respectively.

However, don’t expect to see much of Tommy Lee this go-round, since he only makes what really amounts to a couple of cameo appearances during the flick’s wraparound opening and

closing sequences. Otherwise, Josh Brolin plays K for the balance of the story which unfolds in the summer of 1969.

At the picture's point of departure, we find a one-armed convict called Boris the Animal (Jemaine Clement) sitting behind bars inside Lunar Max, a maximum security prison located on the Moon. The evil alien soon escapes with the help of his cake-bearing girlfriend (Nicole Scherzinger), his first visitor in over 40 years.

Next, Agent J catches wind of the missing fugitive's plans to venture backwards in time to exact a measure of revenge on Agent K for having shot off his limb. The vindictive Boris also intends to spearhead an intergalactic invasion of Earth by the Boglodites, a bloodthirsty race of his rogue relatives. Naturally, J decides to return to the past, too, to keep the world safe for humanity and to make sure his partner survives any attempted rewrite of history.

Courtesy of some preposterous, pseudo-scientific mumbo-jumbo, J learns how to time travel and that he must accomplish all of the above and return to the present in less than 24 hours, before a breach in the temporal fracture closes. (What?) Anyhow, upon arriving on July 16, 1969, Agent J introduces himself to the 29 year-old incarnation of already-humorless Agent K, and does his darnedest to loosen up that trademark, Type-A personality.

What ensues is an engaging enough mix of special effects-driven mirth and mayhem, with the tension being wound around the imperiled launch of Apollo 11 at Cape Canaveral. But since there's never a doubt that Boris and the Boglodites are destined to be subdued, the true payoff arrives after the action subsides by way of an emotional revelation that it would be unfair to spoil.

A fitting, franchise finale featuring all the fixins for a satisfying sendoff!

Very Good (3 stars)
Rated PG-13 for violence and suggestive content.
Running time: 106 minutes
Distributor: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment
DVD Extras: The Making of Men in Black III; "Back in Time" music video by Pitbull; and a gag reel.

To see a trailer for "Men in Black III", visit:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiweqN78BVU

To order a copy of Men in Black III on DVD, visit: http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B008Y1YK9Y/ref%3dnosim/thslfofire-20