

# Movie Review: 'Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation'

By John Mulderig

*Catholic News Service*

NEW YORK - Light the fuse and cue that nerve-jangling theme music everyone loves to hum; it's time for "Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation" (Paramount).

As helmed by writer-director Christopher McQuarrie, this fifth installment in a franchise that dates back, on the big screen, to 1996 - and that began life as a CBS-TV series a full three decades before that - delivers a steady but stylized parade of action. The result is a nifty espionage adventure that most parents will likely find acceptable for their older teens.

Viewers of any age looking for something more substantive than a fun, globe-trotting ride - with occasional reflections on the conflict between personal and patriotic allegiances thrown in along the way - will, however, scratch this picture's slick surface in vain.

But, then, profundity has never been this property's foremost agenda item anyway, whatever the medium. The point here is to waste as little time as possible before positioning agent Ethan Hunt - Tom Cruise, of course - on the outside of an airplane that's roaring off the runway in some ex-Soviet republic, and making the fate of humanity depend on his sheer, headwinds-be-darned stick-to-itiveness.

Do-dah-do, do-dah-do ...

This time out, Ethan and his colleagues on the Impossible Mission Force - an IMF even Greek moviegoers can love - are battling an underground terrorist organization of global reach called The Syndicate. (You can tell they must be dangerous by that capital T.)

Unfortunately for the good guys, Alan Hunley (Alec Baldwin), the stubbornly jealous

director of the CIA, stoutly denies that The Syndicate exists. Worse yet, over the fruitless objections of the IMF's representative, William Brandt (Jeremy Renner), Hunley convinces the Senate committee charged with such matters to shut his rivals' super-secret agency down altogether.

Naturally, Ethan and his intrepid circle – besides Brandt, there's desk jockey-turned-field operative Benji Dunn (Simon Pegg) and topflight computer whizz Luther Stickell (Ving Rhames) – are not to be stymied by the machinations of mere Capitol Hill pen-pushers.

Still, they don't have much to work with: Hunt has gotten a glimpse of The Syndicate's villainous top dog, pasty faced Solomon Lane (Sean Harris). And he's been helped out of a fix by mystery woman Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson). Though Ilsa turns out to be a British agent who has managed to infiltrate The Syndicate, her true loyalties remain uncertain.

The interaction between Ethan and Ilsa is not exactly all business. But those with enough brand memory to recall that Ethan is a married man will not be surprised to observe that romance, in this iteration of his eventful biography, is kept at the level of significant glances and tellingly raised eyebrows.

Along with not overheating things for the younger set, this brake on the central duo's flirtation also allows Ilsa – whose skills in one dust-up after another impress even Ethan himself – to stand on her own two, jujitsu-wielding feet.

The dialogue occasionally ponders the morality of all the violence Ethan and his buddies deal out in defense of the American Way. Are such means justified in pursuit of justice writ large? How can operatives resist the urge to revel in mayhem for its own sake? The answer to these important ethical questions is: Do-dah-do, do-dah-do...

The film contains pervasive but virtually bloodless violence, brief glimpses of partial nudity and a couple of uses each of profanity and crude language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 – parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

*Also see:*

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Movie Review: 'Pixels'

Movie Review: 'Southpaw'

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