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John Wick 4: Does the Cycle of Violence Ever End? [REVIEW & SPOILERS]

Madden Armstrong, Staff Reporter

The fourth and final installment in the “John Wick” franchise solidified the series’ reputation as an action epic like no other. The film’s box office success is greater than any previous installment in the series and is one of the highest grossing R-rated movies since 2020.

Despite its financial success, it appears as if “John Wick 4” will be the last film in the main franchise for the foreseeable future. A prequel series will be available for streaming later this year, and a spinoff film will arrive in theaters 2024 with John Wick (Keanu Reeves) in a supporting role. The film was also one of Lance Reddick’s last roles, playing the fan-favorite character Charon. Reddick passed away March 17.

While it was suspected earlier in the production cycle that

there would be a fifth film in the main series, the idea was ultimately scrapped in favor of a shocking conclusion: John Wick, one of the most iconic action protagonists, dies just moments after the finale.

The death came as a surprise after watching John Wick tear his way through dozens, if not hundreds, of random goons, crime bosses and old enemies with a finesse that made him appear invincible over the course of four films. The consequences of Wick’s cycle of violence appear to catch up to him in his final moments, and he dies of gunshot wounds on the steps of a cathedral.

However, the final scene should not overshadow the rest of the movie. Stuntman-turned-director Chad Stahelski showed his mastery in crafting action-fueled stories. Each fight scene has a distinct feel and choreography: from a luxury hotel in Japan to a futuristic German nightclub to the streets of France, the action satisfies.

Unfortunately, the film’s almost three-hour runtime fatigues the viewer as some fights feel a minute or two too long, or more lowkey scenes appear to lack a sense of urgency that the rest of “John Wick 4” conveys. Some of the dialogue is odd and stilted, as if a character answered a separate question from the one asked to them by another character.

Despite its flaws in pacing and dialogue writing, the rest of the film is on point. The fight choreography and cinematography used to capture it are unparalleled. “John Wick 4” has a distinct vision for its fight scenes that Stahelski and Reeves worked to create together. Reeves performs many of his own stunts, which allows for more close-up camerawork during action scenes without breaking immersion.



Adeline Ong

John Wick Chapter 4 movie poster.

Immersion is truly the name of the game for the “John Wick” franchise, which skillfully whisks the viewer away with a glee that cannot be found anywhere else. The fourth installment also introduces powerful new enemies and allies played by an all-star cast. Marquis (Bill Skarsgård) is granted power by The High Table, an organization tasked with bringing order to the world of assassins. Marquis’ sole job is to kill Wick, which he outsources to a legion of other assassins, including blind martial arts master Caine (Donnie Yen) and bounty hunter Tracker (Shamier Anderson), who have their own motivations for killing Wick and claiming the bounty on his head.

Despite the tenuous alliance Wick forms with Caine and Tracker going into the final act, he faces Marquis in a final showdown where Wick manages to kill him. The encounter leaves Wick with fatal wounds that shows that no matter how hard he fights, he cannot escape his violent past, nor the consequences of his actions.

Wick is told through all four films in the “John Wick” franchise that he can only find peace in death by adversary and ally alike. Everyone ends up being right, which comes off as a bittersweet, rather than downright pessimistic way, to end the beloved movie series.