

# **CINEMA CORNER**

BY: Donna Morgana

## **FREE GUY**

Rate: PG-13 strong fantasy violence, language, and crude/suggestive references  
Budget: \$18 Million  
Release: August 13, 2021  
Producer: Disney  
Director: Shawn Levy (directed Night at the Museum series)

If you want a crash course to the world of gaming, then this movie will give you the insight.

First thing you need to know is what an NPC is (non-play character). They are characters in everyday situations, or simply bystanders with no real functions and aren't controlled by any player in the game but are necessary to have for the bad guys to destroy the city and terrorize the law-abiding citizens. Also, you need to be aware of AI (artificial intelligence). This is also mentioned frequently to describe the character action. In simple terms, AI is like playing chess with the computer. The info is programmed but it recognizes strategies, patterns, and trends to respond to your moves. Lost? Here's the breakdown.

### SUMMARY:

The film stars Ryan Reynolds casted as Guy who wakes up, says good morning to his goldfish, buys a coffee, and goes to work at the frequently robbed bank and discovers that he is actually a NPC in an open-world video game named Free City but ends up becoming the hero of the story, trying to save his other NPC friends from deletion by the game's owners, Soonami Gaming.

Guy wants more from life than just being stuck in a loop and being the same character every day and live his own life. He begins to deviate from his programming and puts on a pair of gaming sunglasses that allows him to play in the game as a gamer. This also allows him to impress a girl in the game named Molotov Girl who happens to be an original creator of the game along with her friend Keys who were robbed of the game code by Soonami.

As his character becomes stronger, Guy is coined as Blue Shirt Guy and begins to understand the game he is in and starts challenging the bad guys. Taming the villains and winning battles, he makes his way up the level chain and gains attention by

everyone who is playing the game, even the creators and controllers and no one can stop him.

Guy has persuaded the other NPCs in the game that they are more than their programming and they no longer need to respond to outside commands and stop being puppets in the game. With a digital walkout in place and all the NPCs gone, the bad guys in the game have no one to terrorize and all the game players are stumped. Suddenly, there is no game to play.

Soon Guy is working for the good of the game and creating such a global media sensation that it crosses into the everyday news feed. This phenomenon is so worldwide that it is even featured as a question (answer) on Jeopardy with a cameo by Alex Trebek himself.

Now ready to tackle the real villain-Soonami, Guy helps Molotov Girl retrieve the one piece of code which proves that the concept was originally hers and Keys. He tackles explosions, dodges gunfire, and outruns machines to get to the one sweet spot where the code is hidden. Successfully retrieving the data, he gives it to Molotov Girl and soon exposes the Soonami owner, Antwan, in front of the entire gaming world and Molotov Girl and Keys are finally validated as the true creators of Free City.

Gaining the recognition as the original creators, Keys and Molotov Girl save the NPCs of Free City giving them a new place to live in a new game called Free Life without having to follow their original Free City coding.

#### CREATIVE ELEMENTS:

A mix of live action, strong fantasy violence glossed over with extreme digital visuals, shows the essence of the gaming industry in a movie format. As the main character walks calmly through a series of explosions, violence, and bloodshed with a smile on his face, this is how the video gaming community dulls the senses to its users.

You will recognize weapons from other franchises like the lightsaber from Star Wars, Hulk's fist, gravity guns, portal guns and Captain America's shield incorporated into the fight for the good to ward off evil.

The movie even exposes the stereotypes of some gamers as soft, formless, candy eating 23-year-old kids still living at home engrossed in gaming while the rest of the family is living the everyday and supporting the household.

#### AS I SEE IT:

Where do I begin...this is a Disney movie sprinkled with unnecessary foul language, desensitized violence and adult overtones that should never be in a PG-13. Walt should be turning over in his grave.

It is a real insight to the gaming world and once you see how it operates, you see how the gamers get sucked in, play forever, and start to disengage. This movie highlights how games of this nature can desensitize and condition a young mind.

Even with the violent game settings, the movie would be fun and entertaining to watch except for the unnecessary profanity, offensive references, and adult innuendos they deem necessary to be valid. Among these elements, they throw in the good guy character, Ryan Reynolds (who is great in the role), to soften the situations. He is like a Steve Carell (The Office) or Will Ferrell (Elf), a likeable soul in unpredictable situations. The movie also has great acting from all the main characters so no disappointment there. The storyline is very innovative and creative but leaves a sour taste due to the lack of decorum shoved in for impact.

Depending on your outlook, this movie being family friendly or not is up to you. I'd go see it first before taking your kids. As I heard a parent commenting on the way out of the theatre, 'I would have loved the movie, but the language ruined it for me.' Hang on movie goers, more to come. With the profiting box office sales, a sequel has been confirmed.

Hopefully they will clean it up, because this movie could have so much more to offer when the unneeded is deleted. Maybe they can write a code for the script writers to keep the profanity out next time.