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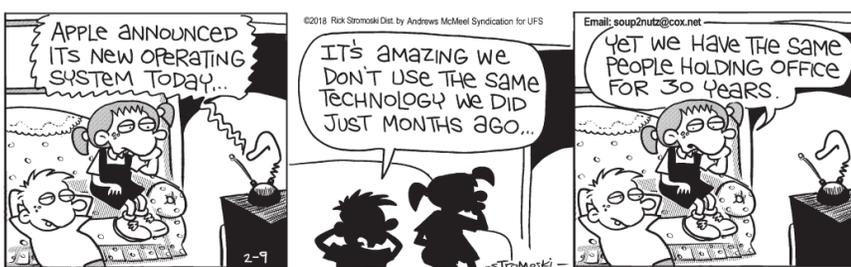
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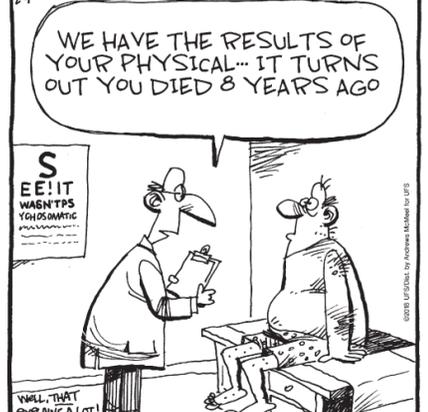
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AT THE MOVIES

Eastwood's '15-17 to Paris' recreates thwarted attack

(AP) — In his latest film, “The 15:17 to Paris,” Clint Eastwood has taken his famously no-frills filmmaking further than ever before. Having already dispensed with many of the typical accoutrements of Hollywood filmmaking — lengthy development, a battery of takes, any handwringing at all — he has, with characteristically little anguish, jettisoned actors from the picture, too. Who needs ‘em, anyway?

Truth be told, there are numerous professional actors in “The 15:17 to Paris,” about the foiled terrorist attack on a 2015 Paris-bound train. But the central characters, and even many of the extras, are played by themselves. The movie, simple and straightforward, derives most of its appeal from its verisimilitude — from its distinctly

“The 15:17 Paris” recounts their childhood together (the three became friends in middle school), their early aspirations of joining the military, and their disappointment at not quickly finding distinction in the ranks. Stone fails to qualify for the Air Force Pararescue. Skarlatos finds himself providing security — “basically a mall cop,” he sighs — in Afghanistan.

Dorothy Blyskal’s script, based on the book the trio wrote with Jeffery E. Stern, flashes through key points in their lives, focusing mainly on Stone. Judy Greer and Jenna Fischer drop in as single moms. There is Thomas Lennon as a school principal and Tony Hale as a gym teacher — a set-up worthy of a promising network sitcom, but their moments here are brief.



un-Holly-wood-ness. But it’s not the quality of the acting that limits Eastwood’s film. It’s a threadbare script that fails to find much of a story to tell behind the headlines about how Oregon National Guardsman Alek Skarlatos, U.S. Air Force Airman First Class Spencer Stone and their friend Anthony Sadler, a college student, tackled and subdued an assailant armed with an AK-47 and nearly 300 rounds of ammunition.

Context is not one of the attributes of “15:17.” It’s too contented with the heroism of a few Americans to take any notice of anything else. The thwarted attack came amid a rash of terror across France. Three months later, 130 would die in coordinated suicide bombings in Paris. Eleven months later, 84 would die in Nice when a truck drove through crowds celebrating Bastille Day.

“The 15:17 to Paris” follows Eastwood’s “Sully,” which also told a story of a regular man turned international hero. In the overly morose tale of Capt. Chesley Sullenberger’s 2009 Hudson River landing, Eastwood focused on the strain of an unwanted spotlight. Here, he gladly shines it on Skarlatos, Stone and Sadler, all of whom look understandably thrilled to be in a Clint Eastwood movie.

The heroes of the train attack deserve all the praise. But zoom out a little and it’s hard not to see Eastwood’s America-centric focus in “The 15:17 to Paris” as self-serving.

It’s far from without precedent to cast real people, particularly ones with military experience. Maybe the movie business senses soldiers have something that can’t be faked. There was Harold Russell’s Oscar-winning World War II veteran in William Wyler’s “The Best Years of Our Lives” (1946), the decorated Audie Murphy in 1955’s “To Hell and Back” and, more recently, 2012’s “Act of Valor,” with active duty Navy SEALs.

“The 15:17 to Paris,” a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for “bloody images, violence, some suggestive material, drug references and language.”

CROSSWORDS

- ACROSS**
- 1 Society newbies
 - 5 Corrida shouts
 - 9 Youngster
 - 12 Farm unit
 - 13 Elbow
 - 14 Emma in “The Avengers”
 - 15 Broken to bits
 - 17 Knight’s title
 - 18 Slang motorcycle
 - 19 Pique
 - 20 Pale
 - 22 Santa — winds
 - 23 Depot (abbr.)
 - 24 Crowbar
 - 27 Crushes
 - 30 At the drop of —
 - 31 Merriment
 - 32 Clock numeral
 - 34 Fat cat’s bundle
 - 35 Hang back
 - 36 Nudges
- DOWN**
- 1 Cook’s smidgen
 - 2 Mountain refrain
 - 37 Station, as troops
 - 40 Pop
 - 41 Bruce — of kung fu
 - 42 Table part
 - 43 Gulls’ perch
 - 46 Novelty
 - 47 Luge surface
 - 50 Tax shelter
 - 51 Walked in winter
 - 54 Inquire
 - 55 Yield, as interest
 - 56 007’s alma mater
 - 57 Stockholm carrier
 - 58 Takes home
 - 59 Cape Canaveral org.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

CHE	ADS	FAME
HUG	CRAB	ITLL
I	LOVEYOU	LOLL
CASITA	SEINES	
	CID	FAN
LILAC	TARGET	
AGAR	CORN	DIT
COM	LITE	NADA
RAZORS	TAMED	
	ESC	OWS
BARREL	TEACUP	
OREO	ECHELONS	
AIDE	SUED	LIS
SASS	DRS	ATT

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