



Film Review

SPIDER-MAN: BRAND NEW DAY

By Duncan Forbes



Spider-Man: Brand New Day is the 38th film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and the fourth film in the Tom Holland-starring *Spider-Man* series, following the character's last appearance in 2021's *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. We join Peter Parker five years later, with no one knowing who he is. While trying to reconnect with the friends he left behind, a powerful new foe emerges, threatening the Department of Damage Control, and New York City as a whole.

Taking over from Peyton Reed, who helmed the first three MCU *Spider-Man* movies, *Brand New Day* is directed by Destin Daniel Cretton, who also directed *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*. Cretton certainly brings a different style to the web-slinger, with the cinematography, and especially the camerawork around Spider-Man's web swinging, being much more dynamic and interesting than in the original MCU trilogy.

Chris McKenna and Erik Sommers return to screenplay duties, having also written *Spider-Man: Far from Home* and *No Way Home*. The plot of this movie is much more dense than previous entries in the series, with dozens of threads and characters, which the writers do manage to balance fairly well. Unfortunately, the dialogue swings between pretty good and rather cringey,



which is par for the course at this point in the MCU. The special effects, something that has become increasingly criticised in recent Marvel movies, are pretty good overall, with Spidey's fights, the Hulk and the powers of the mysterious antagonist all being realised well. There are a few ropery moments, but is' not nearly as egregious as it has been in previous films.

The cast, well established at this point, all bring something new to their characters. Tom Holland adds a lot of depth to a more mature, and much

lonelier, Peter Parker. Mark Ruffalo gets to play both an older, professorial Bruce Banner and, for the first time in years, a truly savage Hulk. Jon Bernthal steals every scene he's in as the Punisher. Zendaya and Jacob Batalon, as Peter's ex-girlfriend MJ and former best friend Ned respectively, have less to do than before, but are still charismatic, and have great chemistry with Holland. Newcomers like Tramell Tillman as D.O.D.C. head Bill Metzger, and Sadie Sink as the unannounced villain, slot in brilliantly.

Spider-Man: Brand New Day isn't perfect. It feels a little long, some of the subplots could probably have been cut, and the post-credits scene doesn't make a ton of sense. But it's still the best live-action *Spider-Man* movie in many years, and will please fans, while renewing excitement for the future of the franchise.