

Premium adrenaline rushing



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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As a screenwriter, David Koepp thrilled us with Jurassic park; as a writer and director he captivated our imagination with Panic Room and Secret Window. Now, with his breathtaking Premium Rush, Koepp once again explores the explosive dynamics between the ordinary world and an extraordinary experience that delivers unexpected twists and surprising revelations.

Armed with guts, unwavering determination and super reflexes, ordinary bike messengers in New York City become heroic soldiers of delivery who brave a war zone of peak traffic and pedestrians. Racing against time to beat the clock and rival bike messengers to deliver their messages and get paid, every second counts and every moment wasted can literally be a matter of life and death. If ever you got stuck in traffic, Premium Rush will open a whole new world where bikes take on traffic without hesitation. These fearless daredevils tackle impossible tasks to achieve their goals.





Four plots drive the narrative

Koepp succeeds in keeping a steady but tense and racy pace by skilfully intercutting four plots that drive the narrative: the main plot focuses on a rebellious and aggressive champion messenger (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) whose routine "premium rush" run - turns into a life-or-death chase through the streets of Manhattan; the plot that kick-starts the action takes us into the shady world of mobsters and illegal operations; an aggressive cop from hell who breaks all rules to get what he wants introduces a dangerous antagonist; and a cheeky romantic triangle adds a humorous dimension to the story.

As writer-director Koepp splendidly shows that he is a scribe of note, giving us a story that is fresh and filled with vibrant characters, as director he manages masterfully to turn his words and ideas into action and visual splendour.

Koepp knows how to draw his audience into the world and lives of his characters, and equally delivers a meaningful experience at the end of an emotional journey. There is intelligence in his telling and execution that is rewarding.

Dangerous obstacles and daring choices

Koepp imaginatively takes us into the seat of a bike messenger and visually explores the dangerous obstacles and daring choices that have to be overcome and outsmarted on their quest to be the best and beat all odds.

Premium Rush shows to what extent people will go to save strangers, and how strangers can severely impact on our lives; although the film delivers an important message, it never takes itself too seriously.

If you are looking for entertainment that is exciting and refreshing, make sure to catch Premium Rush. The chances are very good that you will be on the edge of your seat and actively engage in the thrilling journey, rooting for the unsung heroes and booing the baddies.

The main aim of films is to entertain, and with Premium Rush, the adrenaline rush after leaving the cinema is an added bonus.

Behind the scenes

"I wanted to do a movie more or less in real time, very compressed, but wide-open in terms of space," said writer-director David Koepp. The answer was a race, uptown to downtown, in less than 90 minutes - all from the point of view of one of New York City's omnipresent bicycle messengers. "Walking the streets in New York, you see bike messengers everywhere," said Koepp. "Or, more often, you don't see them until they blast by you with about six inches to spare. They're irresponsible as hell, they never follow the rules, but they're the only ones that seem to be fully in control out there."

In keeping with the practical tone of the film, Koepp shot Premium Rush on location in New York City. "We knew we couldn't have anybody look at the movie and think, 'That's a backdrop, that's a soundstage,'" said Koepp. "It had to be real, live New York traffic. We needed to be, whenever we could, on the actual street that John Kamps and I wrote into the script. I wanted New Yorkers watching the movie to watch Wilee turn a corner and think, 'Yeah, that makes sense'. For us, it was a great, exciting way to showcase the entire city, from uptown to Chinatown, on a bicycle. I wanted to make a map movie where the maps really work."

Though they knew that shooting in New York would be a challenge, it was one they believed would pay off in the end. "New York is like working with the most difficult actor you've ever encountered," said Koepp. "A little bit surly, really difficult, moody, but then when you look at your footage, thank God they're in your movie."

Read more at www.writingstudio.co.za/page4236.html

ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za
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