

Entertainment Report: 'The American' Out-Draws The Mexican

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George Clooney stars in the title role of director Anton Corbijn's suspense thriller *THE AMERICAN*, a Focus Features release.

Photo Credit: Giles Keyle

HOLLYWOOD, CA ([RPRN](#))
09/07/10 — by Brandon Gray

The summer movie season came to a typically quiet close over the four-day Labor Day weekend. [The American](#) led the way with a standard-issue George Clooney debut, [Machete](#) had an average late summer action movie launch,

while [Going the Distance](#) stalled. Overall business, though, was up nearly four percent from the same timeframe last year.

The American earned an estimated \$16.4 million over the long weekend at 2,823 locations for a \$19.5 million tally since opening Wednesday. That was much more than recent Labor Day adult thrillers *The Constant Gardener* and *Traitor*, though the movie's attendance was mid-pack among assassin-themed pictures. Most of George Clooney's recent vehicles have opened in the same range as *The American's* \$13.1 million three-day weekend, including *The Men Who Stare at Goats*, *Leatherheads*, *Michael Clayton* and *Syriana*. As quiet as *The American* may seem, it had the fourth-highest grossing Labor Day launch ever. Distributor Focus Features reported that *The American's* audience was 66 percent aged 35 years and older (88 percent was 25 years and older) and 55 percent male.



Though it was barely first on Friday, *Machete* lost steam faster than *The*

American and wound up in second with an estimated \$14 million at 2,670 locations. It had a stronger start than *Gamer* from the same weekend last year, and its \$11.4 million Friday-to-Sunday weekend wasn't far behind its source, the box office bust *Grindhouse*. However, it did less than half the business of director Robert Rodriguez last straight-forward action picture, *Once Upon a Time in Mexico*. Distributor 20th Century Fox's research showed that 55 percent of *Machete*'s audience was male, 55 percent was 25 years and older, and 60 percent was Latino.

Last weekend's top draw, *Takers*, came in third with an estimated \$13.5 million. It slipped a normal 47 percent Friday-to-Sunday, and its cumulative take grew to \$40 million in eleven days.

The Last Exorcism was cast aside in its second weekend, falling harder than average for a supernatural horror movie. It was off 64 percent Friday-to-Sunday and made an estimated \$8.8 million for the four-day weekend. The percentage drop was even more severe than *The Fourth Kind* and *Exorcist: The Beginning* experienced. The movie's total rose to \$33.6 million in eleven days.

With an estimated \$8.6 million four-day start at 3,030 locations, *Going the Distance* isn't in it for the long haul. The romantic comedy had one of the weakest debuts on record for its genre, especially considering the size of its release. It grossed about as much in four days as smaller releases *The Switch* and *Love Happens* made in three. *Going the Distance*'s audience was 66 percent female and 77 percent over 25 years and older (and 52 percent over 35 years old), according to distributor Warner Bros.

For more analysis on *The American*, *Machete* and *Going the Distance* analysis, [click here to read the Weekend Briefing](#).

Despicable Me had the best hold among non-expanding nationwide holdovers. Its Friday-to-Sunday was up a tick from last weekend, and it pulled in an estimated \$3.9 million Friday-to-Monday, bringing its total to a lofty \$241.3 million in 60 days.

Inception also held its ground, easing seven percent Friday-to-Sunday and generating an estimated \$5.9 million over the four-day weekend. Its sum grew to a mighty \$278.4 million in 53 days.

The Other Guys was still in the mix as well, and the top-grossing picture from 2010, Toy Story 3, more than doubled its location count for summer's last hurrah, increasing its haul to \$408.8 million in 81 days.

Down a respectable 30 percent Friday-to-Sunday, The Expendables marched closer to the \$100 million mark. It bagged an estimated \$8.5 million over the long weekend, pushing its sum to \$94.1 million in 25 days.

Meanwhile, for the first time, Eat Pray Love trailed the cumulative gross of its analogue from last August, Julie & Julia, through the same point. Off 30 percent Friday-to-Sunday and losing weight faster than Julie, Eat packed an estimated \$6.3 million four-day weekend for a \$70.4 million tally in 25 days, or around \$1 million behind Julie.

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