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## **Action: Stunt Doubles**

### **History and Social Impact**

One of the most critical features in action movies is stunt performance. Actors perform some dangerous operations such as jumping through great heights, car crashes, and explosives. Even though some of these scenes are edited, some bold action is needed. However, some actors are aged or have other conditions that cannot let them act their stunts, and they chose to use stunt doubles. These doubles, who are almost identical to the actors, perform those stunts on their behalf, and the credit goes to the real actors. The genre of Action (Stunt Doubles) is crucial for first; it brings excitement in some actions in the film industry that seems impossible for the viewers. It brings a unique fiction that makes the actors superheroes whose characters are essential lessons to our lives. Again, those stunts bring the notion that nothing is impossible, which is an encouragement for the viewers to work harder or smarter. The stunt doubles make the impossible happen while following the script faithfully when the actors are not able to act the stunts. The genre is unique in the film industry for changing the impossible to possible.

Stunts developed years ago with comedians acting the role while at their jobs. It was in the early 20th century when the stunt industry started to grow with the use of real stunts in movies. Actors would act their tricks, which were dangerous as the technology was not much developed,

and the actors had to perform what was on the script (Grabianowski, 2020). The film industry would hire actors who were willing to risk their lives in real car crashes and fighting. In the mid-20th century, the stunt industry had much developed, and filmmakers began to hire professional stunt performers. The technology was growing, and the stunts were becoming less dangerous. However, the stunt performers would double to become the stars of the movies, and it was then when the stunt doubles were developed (Grabianowski, 2020). The filmmakers would find a stunt performer who was identical to the star actor of their choice and perform where the star cannot. At this age, the stunt industry is fully developed, and with computer-generated images technology, the stunts are not much risk as they used to be (Grabianowski, 2020).

Some of these movie stars need stunts for some technical performances, and they have acquired some full-time tricks. Some of the stunt performers are as famous as movie stars. The stunts act so well such that the viewers cannot differentiate between the movie stars and the tricks. One of the well-known people involved in the double stunts is Alicia Vela-Bailey, who has worked as a stunt double in Hollywood for years. One of her best feats is her act as Super Woman stunt in the Justice League movies where she was the double stunt for Gal Gadot. Next is Stuart Wilson, who usually works as the double stunt for Bruce Willis. One of their acts is in the movie Die Hard. Tanoai Reed has been Dwayne Johnson double stunt for some time, their identicalness being in the DNA for they are first cousins. Finally, Carleton was Angelina Jolie's double stunt in Salt (Draws, 2019).

### **Discourse Community**

The discourse community associated with the double stunt genre is a community of some movie geeks who enjoy and discuss comic stories. We discuss the superheroes in comics and

create a universe of how things could have been different had a certain hero acted differently or had been given other powers. It is in those comics that the superhero movie comes to place. We discuss how a specific actor fared in his or her role as a superhero in that movie. It is in the fairs that the stunts come into place. We talk about how the tricks turned out and search if the actor acted the stunts or he or she had a double stunt. Then from there, the topic of double stunts comes in as we discuss how different double tricks have fared in various action movies. Whether in or outside the community, we talk about the comics or the stunts using the movie language that people outside the city may find hard to understand. Our inside jokes also involve some lines in the same or different movies pierced together artistically. Our community is within our neighborhood, and any comic fanatic is welcome.

### **Rules and Message**

Given that the double stunt is a dangerous genre, some rules are followed for its success. For instance, the filmmakers are advised to hire professional tricks as the actor, if inexperienced, may end up getting injured or worse, dead. Next, the double stunt should be physically identical to the star actor to make the act convincing. However, in cases like the movie *Deadpool*, the actor is masked, and the double stunt may not necessarily resemble the star actor (Draws, 2019). The double stunt should not act more than it is planned as the risk might not be contained (my Risks, 2018). The film creators should, therefore, beforehand, calculate the maximum risk that they can allow on the stunt. The stunt should always act his or her best even though there are no awards for them. The credit goes to the movie star. Lastly, the filmmakers are advised to apply editing if possible, to avoid unnecessary risks to the double stunt.

The main message in the double stunt in the action genre is that no one is limited in whichever endeavors that he or she partakes. Before the double stunt, some stories could only be told in writing or narrating as acting them seemed impossible or, slightly, crazy. Therefore, one could only read novels and comics and create the entire fantasy in his or her head. Like in comics, you could only think of how the superheroes could look like in real life, and how they could solve some of the world's problems. With the development of double stunts, the picture became more transparent, and the message in the stories could sink in better. The fights, the falling off cliffs, and the plane crashes became real, and with the double stunts, the actors could perform some of these acts effortlessly. The heroes could be seen defeating the villains. The message was apparent that nobody is limited.

The genre has different themed movies where some are about ordinary people dealing with one another, sometimes in more than real action. Others are about superheroes who got non-human powers fighting villains and aliens using their superpowers. Therefore, the message differs from one movie to another, though they all try to bring the element of impossibility happening. Sometimes, it is an aged person physically attacking some energetic people who, in real life, it would be impossible to perform. However, the double stunt makes that possible. For example, in the movie *Fast and Furious 7*, Paul Walker dies before the shooting of the film is completed. However, his double stunt takes the role well, and the end is a success. The message, in that case, is that life does not have to stop when a person leaves. Everyone is replaceable after the sad moment for life must move on.

One of the most amazing double stunts happens in the movie *Suicide Squad*, written and directed by David Ayer (Ayer, 2016). In the movie, Ingrid Koenig is the double stunt for Margot Robbie, one of the stars in the film (Draws, 2019). They both act for the character of Harley

Quinn, which demands a lot of physical activity that the actress could not manage. However, the double stunt works well and saves the day. David Ayer plans the role of the actor and picks the double stunt well such that no one could notice the difference without prior information. The tricks are acted correctly, and the character stands out the most in the movie. The physical stress saves the star actress for the other roles that she does not disappoint either. The director, the actress, and the double stunt do justice for the Harley Quinn character, and the performance is stellar.

Harley Quinn is the most outstanding character in the movie *Suicide Squad* (Ayer, 2016). She turns to be the best partner in crime to the Joker character that she takes attention from him. The success of that character is from the combined effort of the actress and the double stunt. The actress is good at her role, that is why she is picked for the character. However, she is limited in physical feats, and the film creators get the best substitute as the double stunt. The message, in this case, is that everyone has a unique role to play in their part, and they should perform their best in that role. The combination of two or more best characters brings better results than the burdening of many tasks to one person who is only useful in one of them. The double stunts are as good as the actors, only in a different field. Therefore, there is no need for competition for the most successful as everyone is a success in a separate area, a mediocre in another. The combination of several victories yields more significant progress, like the Harley Quinn character.

In the *Suicide Squad* movie, the intended audience is first the comic story lovers. The comic fans like to see how the person is given the character of their favorite superhero fares. Sometimes, the fans come to an agreement that the actress has acted beyond their expectation. The case of Harley Quinn was one of those times. The character turned better than the comic

fans had fantasized in their minds. The double stunt had the physical actions performed correctly, and the star had the other roles done well too. The outcome was fantastic, and the audience was satisfied. Therefore, the primary audience, who are the comic story lovers, was awed by the performance of Harley Quinn in specific and the entire movie in general.

Every great movie always has its constraints, which do not make it less significant, and the Suicide Squad was not an exception. The focus here is on the character of Harley Quinn, which is played by the starring actress and her double stunt (Ayer, 2016). The first constraint is the lack of physical prowess on the starring actress, which leads to the movie creators hiring a double stunt. The double stunt can perform most of the physical fight that Harley Quinn is involved in. However, some of them, like jumping from the aircraft is not even possible for the double stunt. In that case, editing must be used to follow the script. All the constraints in the double stunt action fall on the physical activities that are impossible for the human body.

The double stunt in action movies is an essential aspect as the act deals with the limitations in the actress' part. The action can still go on despite the actor or actress is not able to perform some parts. Therefore, the storyline is not distorted by one person's liability. For instance, in our discourse community, we always want the actor or actress to perform what is right, especially in comic stories, where we already know the storyline. With following the script faithfully, the intended message is passed well, and the film is exciting and real. The society gets the message right when the action looks real than acted, and that is why the double stunts are always necessary.

In conclusion, the stunt doubles in action movies brings out what the preferred actor or actress could not bring. They go in great lengths to make the star of the film look right without them taking any credit with them. The combined efforts of the actor and the double stunt bring a

complete character to the viewers, like the case of Harley Quinn in the Suicide Squad movie. The critical concept here is that the hiring of a stunt double is to bring out the best of a character for the sake of the fans. Also having a stunt in a movie makes any movie more interesting to watch and to have the role of a stunt double is such a great thing because they get paid to make the actors/actress look good for their movies and the aim is to make an action movie feel real to the viewers.

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