

## Tango & Cash ★½

---

**Year of Release:** 1989

Review by Randy Parker

**Country:** USA

**Verdict:** Skip It

---

I have nothing against mindless fun at the movies; in fact, sometimes I welcome it. Mindless fun is one thing; however, brain-dead slop—like *Tango & Cash*—is another matter altogether. *Tango & Cash* has “lowest common denominator” written all over it.

The movie stars Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell as rival undercover cops in Los Angeles. Russell plays Cash, a reckless slob who dresses in jeans and tee shirts. Stallone plays Tango, a wealthy investor who works on the force strictly for the thrill of it; he doesn't need the money. In an effort to change his image, Stallone goes for a yuppie, GQ look in the film, wearing spectacles and three piece suits. The two detectives reluctantly become partners after they are framed for murder and have to break out of prison to clear their names.

*Tango & Cash* is unbearably noisy. For starters, there's Harold Faltermeyer's annoying synthesized score, which gets old after four notes. To make matters worse, the filmmakers seem to think that when it comes to loud explosions and screeching cars, the more the merrier. In fact, the movie begins with not one but two car chases. There's nothing like a good old car chase to introduce the characters in a movie.

Screenwriter Randy Feldman's brain must have gone to mush from watching too many cop shows on TV. His shockingly stupid screenplay undermines anything and everything the movie has going for it, such as Stallone's efforts to convince you that Tango is an intellectual. In a movie with the IQ level of an amoeba, even a great actor is going to have trouble looking intelligent—and Stallone is no Lawrence Olivier. It's hard to imagine anyone reading Feldman's script and thinking, “I want to be in this movie.”

The film's plot doesn't have one original bone in its body, and—again—you have to point your finger at the screenwriting. Feldman's story line succumbs to every crime thriller cliché in the book, making *Tango & Cash* altogether generic and predictable. They simply could have called it “Action Movie.” Every character, every twist and turn, is stolen from television or from other movies. Adding insult to injury, *Tango & Cash* is about as believable as a “Road Runner” cartoon. Action movies don't have to be realistic, but they should

absorb you enough so that you're not thinking about the lack of realism.

The only artistic aspect of *Tango & Cash* is the cinematography. There are some spectacular shots, especially during the rainy nighttime prison break in which Tango and Cash slide to safety on electrical wires.

The film's main draw is the chemistry between Stallone and Russell. Unfortunately, their relationship rarely progresses past macho competition as they endlessly bicker about who packs more meat in his pants. The dialogue consists of nothing but one-liners, and consequently the attempts at character development are embarrassing. It's a shame because with a workable screenplay, Russell and Stallone could have turned *Tango & Cash* into a charming “Lethal Weapon-esque” adventure.

*Tango & Cash* tries to maintain a light tone, and you do laugh about once every five minutes. Seeing Russell in drag is the movie's funniest moment, but you probably already have seen it in the commercials. Furthermore, the light tone does not sit well against the relentlessly brutal violence. Machine guns and torture generally don't mix well with comedy.

Jack Palance appears in *Tango & Cash* doing what he does best: playing a sleazy, conniving villain. His character, however, is run-of-the-mill, except for his strange obsession with mice. Like many movie villains, Palance likes to play games. In fact, he sets a ridiculously elaborate trap for Tango and Cash, a trap which sends the two detectives to prison so they can be beaten and electrocuted by some meanies in the boiler room. You have to wonder why Palance doesn't just shoot the detectives in the head! The story would crumble if any of the characters were to do anything intelligent.

Teri Hatcher plays Stallone's sister and Russell's love-interest, and she is just as pretty as can be. But regrettably, Hatcher's acting is not on par with her exceptional beauty. Every time she opens her mouth, you cringe; corny dialogue and atrocious acting are always a fatal combination.

There's really very little, if anything, to recommend in the film. And, more to the point, *Tango* definitely isn't worth a penny of your cash—so don't bother.