



Shit. We're Toast.

**By Christina Harlin, Your
Fearless Young Orphan**

***Geostorm* (2017)**

Directed by Dean Devlin

Fans of bad movies might get a kick out of *Geostorm* if it doesn't bore them to death first; it really is quite a fascinating combination of mistakes. This confused wannabe

masquerades as yet another candidate in a long line of end-of-the-world movies, and it doesn't even do us the favor of being memorably cornball.

I'll grant that it's not in great company even in its coveted genre. Many of these "Shit! We're toast!" films are either simply dreadful (the ponderous stupidity of *2012*) or precariously unbalanced (the heartfelt but dull *San Andreas*). So my mother asked me, "Is *Geostorm* worse than *2012*?" because she didn't believe any disaster film could be, and I had to admit that, yes, it is worse. At least *2012* was following something like a storyline while it was being awful. *Geostorm* is as uncertain about its own purpose as the hacked satellites ostensibly at the core of its dilemma. We get a strange and ugly hybrid of other films: time and again you'll be reminded of something that you enjoyed watching far more than this, and it'll just make you feel sad and a bit angry.

So what's up with *Geostorm*? Is this a disaster movie? Well, it would like to be. Disaster films make money. But *Geostorm's* disasters are few, far between, and meaningless, because we don't care about anybody and there's damned little context to these things – we're just watching two-minute segments of globe-hopping disasters mocked up in uninspired CG.

Okay then, is it an espionage movie? Someone has hijacked the Earth-wide satellite system that keeps the weather under control and is using it in an Ernst-Blofeld-styled plot to remake the world. There is endless talk of hacking and jacking and hacky-sacking; kids these days!

Is it a family drama? Yeah, whether you like it or not. By god we spend a lot of time watching a repulsive pair of brothers bicker about who's got a bigger, ahem, Dutchboy. It's important that they reconcile because family, brothers' code, something something. This kind of thing matters to us only if we care about either brother; since once is a first-class idiot and the other a world-class douchebag (you get to guess which is which, but rest assured, they both act like children) I don't think this qualifies as good family drama.

Is this a space opera? A lot of the film takes place on the International Space Station (which is as spacious as the Death Star and full of bored employees) but, you know, screw any sense of beauty or wonder to it – the space station crew

might as well be in warehouse for all the difference it makes.

Is this a political thriller? Oh ha, how funny, I couldn't get through that question without laughing. Of course the conspiracy of the weather goes all the way to the White House, and there is a lot of half-assed



Depending on the neighborhood, these storms could do tens of dollars' worth of damage.

posturing about who has the right to control the world's weather. Our "heroes" must eventually kidnap President Andy Garcia because he's the only one who can something something with the launch codes on the something something, lightning storm, taxi cabs, some guy in Hong Kong traces hacky sacking, Abbie Cornish looks like she'd do anything to be somewhere else, and so on. Because this is a movie, kidnapping the President proves to be extraordinarily easy – let's just let Nic Cage steal the Constitution while we're at it.

This is going to be awful, but here I go with a plot synopsis. It's sometime in the future. My Movie Buddy and I were never clear on how far into the future it was, as everything on Earth looks pretty much the same, but everything in space is at least half a century more developed than we are now. Climate change has made the weather on Earth so volatile that entire cities were being destroyed; thank God Gerard Butler invented a thingy that manages to control the weather through an array of satellites all over the world, operated by the United States out of the International Space Station, and nicknamed "Dutchboy." Gerard is a loose cannon because that's an easy character choice, both to write and to act.

He starts out the movie by getting in trouble with a grand jury for what amounts to insubordination aboard the International Space Station – I think he saved the world by releasing some satellites to disperse a storm without getting government approval ahead of time – he's such a loose cannon! And so Toby Zeigler from *The West Wing* fires Gerard and puts in his place – I'm giggling, sorry, forgive me—Gerard's younger brother Jim Sturgess who is Mr. Not-Loose-Cannon and looks about seventeen years old and acts rather younger than that. I don't



So, I guess, winter is coming?

know what qualifications he has to be in charge of the entire world's weather, but Gerard Butler is SUPER PISSED about it and they don't speak to each other for three years.



Controlling the world's weather is hard work for a sixth-grader.

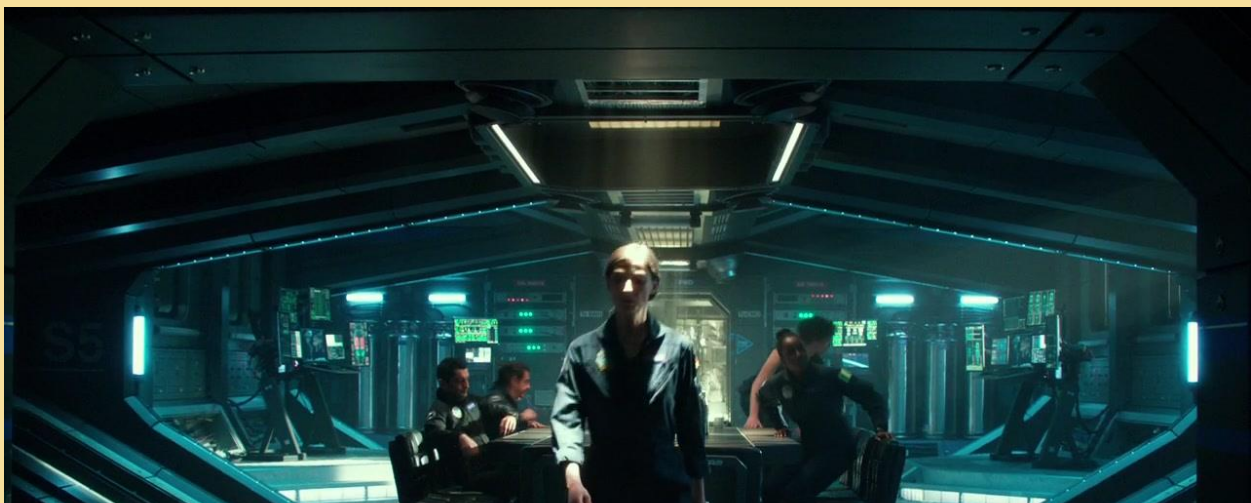
Three years later. . . seems like the weather, which I assume has been all right for a while, is starting to get glitchy again. Spots of bizarre freezing and other weatherly nonsense are popping up across the globe. This guy in Hong Kong, who works with Gerald and Jim in some capacity, sees a pattern in the storms: someone is acting out a “geostorm” scenario in which certain storms breaking out over the world will cause a worldwide disaster that decimates damn near everybody and everything, and they are hacking Dutchboy in order to make this happen. Meanwhile President Andy Garcia says “Get Gerard Butler up there to fix this Dutchboy thing all by himself, because we can control him,” because President Garcia forgot that Gerard Butler was a loose cannon. Gerard says goodbye to his daughter (who out-acts and out-classes him every step of the way) and gets on a shuttlebus to space. Once aboard the space station he meets his crew, a specialized teams of experts who will ultimately do very little, then yells at people and acts like a dick and a loose cannon until he discovers espionage.

Back on earth, by a method that simply had to involve blackmail, Jim Sturgess is dating Abbie Cornish, who is Secret Service protecting President Garcia. She’ll prove herself to be incredibly bad at her job later on, but for now, let’s just focus on how dismissive and mocking Jim acts about her *extremely serious job*, flirting with her and trying to distract her while she’s on duty in front of the Oval Office,

or acting sulky when she has to go to work, and asking her idiotic questions like whether in a firefight she'd choose to protect Jim instead of the President. This kind of shit ain't funny and I cannot imagine what kind of dirt he must have on her in order to keep her paying attention to him. The very idea that a Secret Service agent would put up with his shit is more unbelievable than anything that's happening with the weather.

In some convoluted way, Jim (and Abbie) and Gerard will work from both Earth and space to save the planet from the threatening geostorm which is – I swear to God – on a countdown clock. Eight minutes to geostorm? Man, our local meteorologists can't predict a single snowstorm without being six hours off the mark.

Oh hell. I just spent a few minutes plotting out the action for you and then realized these things might be considered spoilers so I just deleted it, which is annoying to me because you have no idea how damn hard it is to try and explain what happens in this movie. Connecting the dots from moment to moment left me scratching my head. It's difficult enough to follow what the hell is happening, never mind trying to understand *why* or *how* or *what these bozos plan to do about it*. This is a film that can't even be bothered to ensure that we know where everybody is standing in a room, much less what the point of any of their actions



The International Space Station: now with plenty of room for event parking.

might be.

I was feeling confused by the plot and went to read its outline on Wikipedia, where I learned that I recalled so little of what was supposed to be the “plot” that I feel a little bad about writing out an essay. Shouldn’t I be able to tell you something more than “I can’t remember any of this crap?” And I was actually paying attention – this wasn’t one of those movies where I was actually coloring in my *Star Wars* coloring book while pretending to watch – and it still just all slipped away, and all I remember is how many times my Movie Buddy and I stopped the movie to look at each other and say things like, “Wait, what the hell are they doing? What did they just figure out? How?” And my Movie Buddy, who ain’t stupid, didn’t realize that Abbie Cornish’s boyfriend and Gerard Butler’s brother were the same guy. That’s Jim Sturgess for you in a nutshell.

And, hey look at that: was I just dreaming fondly, or were characters disappearing? Were they escaping, tunneling out of the movie, were they slipping out a back window when the director wasn’t looking? Were they taking the scripts with them? I’m joking; I don’t believe that there was a script. The movie was justifiably stalled by its own studio and then swept under the carpet almost the minute after it was finally released. *Geostorm* is bonkers, a confused and disorganized mess that can’t remember from one scene to the next what the hell it was doing; we as the audience fare no better. That being said, my Movie Buddy and I have a keen appreciation for bad films and found this one fascinating. Making “disaster movie” jokes is just too easy, but you see where I’m going with this, don’tcha?