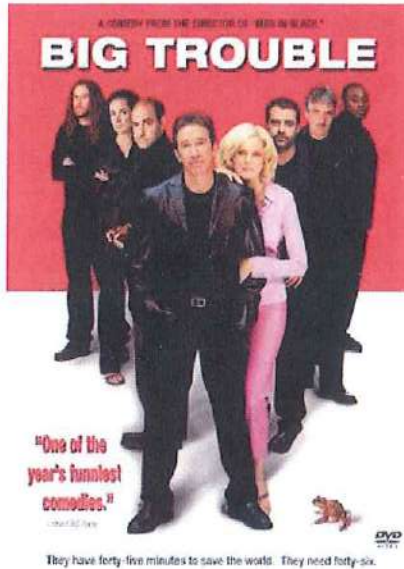


## Mark Whelan's Movie Picks

**Big Trouble** (2002) Director: Barry Sonnenfeld. 85m Rated PG-13



Allen plays a gutted advertiser--and single-parent to Ben Foster—struggling to eke out a living. Things get sticky when Foster is mixed up with high-school peer (Zooey Deschanel), her disenchanted mother (Rene Russo), and volatile stepfather (acted with gusto by Stanley Tucci) targeted for assassination by low-rent hit-men. Meanwhile, a rundown tavern is custodian to a nuclear warhead now fallen into the incompetent hands of beach bum (Jason Lee) and two foolhardy crooks (Tom Sizemore and Johnny Knoxville).



Screenwriters Robert Ramsey and Matthew Stone succeed in remaining under the ninety-minute mark to workable resolve with Sonnenfeld's rapid-fire direction hitting every opportune beat. The whole is not entirely successful, but an entertaining and nimble escapade into potentially dark and solemn topics.

**Big Trouble** is a slight but hilarious yarn with winning performances and undeserving of the preemptive rancor it received.

—Mark Whelan, October 5, 2014