

Gore Verbinski's *Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die*—The solution to the world's problems? Infect everyone with anti-technology allergy

David Walsh
10 April 2026

Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die (2025) is a science fiction “black comedy” film directed by Gore Verbinski (*Pirates of the Caribbean*, *The Ring*). It is a dreadful work. A libel against humanity, humanity returned the favor by largely staying away in droves.

Unfortunately, the talented and amusing Sam Rockwell is burdened with the role of “the man from the future,” who shows up at a diner in Los Angeles, dirty, bearded and draped in tubes and whatnot, and begins to lecture the patrons and employees about how they are responsible for destroying civilization and need to join his “revolution” against artificial intelligence (AI) and technology in general.

Verbinski's film, from a script by Matthew Robinson (*The Invention of Lying*), doesn't waste time in setting out its central themes. It will be enough to cite extensively from the lengthy opening monologue (11 script pages) to give the reader an authentic sense of the entire nasty, misanthropic work:

I am from the future! And all of this ... goes horribly wrong, horribly wrong. ... I traveled here today to tell you that things do not go well for you in the future. In fact, I'd say you are embarking upon the darkest possible timeline. This is all a giant mistake. ... Social media has robbed you of your dignity, and turned you all into children. ... I'm from the future. A future which is totally, completely f——. And guess what? It's all your fault. Not specifically you 40 or so people, but everyone from your time. You're all equally complicit.

He continues:

It all started with morning phone time. At first, people would wake up, check their emails in bed, look at Facebook, scroll Twitter, X, Y, Z, whatever. Just a few minutes. No big deal. But morning phone time just got longer, and longer. Eventually, people stopped getting out of bed entirely. Society fell apart. People had to be hooked up to feeding tubes and catheters. The medical supply industry boomed. But everything else was f——. No one even noticed that the f——

world had ended.

And further:

Where did all the bookstores go? ... What did you do when the record stores started disappearing? Nothing. You did nothing. Pop quiz. Anybody know a phone number? I bet not one of you knows a single phone number by heart anymore. Progress is only progress if it makes things better. Otherwise, it's a mistake. Humanity has made wrong turns before. Hitler, the Segway. Someone just has to be there to turn us around, put us back on course, to say, “No, children, this is not right, this is not the way.” That's why I'm here. I'm looking for recruits, soldiers, people who have nothing to lose and everything to fight for. There is an artificial intelligence coming in the not-so-distant future that shuts this whole human civilization thing down. But it can be stopped. Humanity can be saved. And this is where the revolution begins.

There you have it! The rest of this miserable film amounts to a “fleshing out” of these conceptions.

The man from the future has organized a team 116 times before in the same diner, and always failed. He once again recruits a small number of those on hand and sets off on his recurring mission. A short distance away, a 9-year-old-boy is “building God in his bedroom ... Post-singularity, self-perpetuating, information-processing artificial intelligence, AI, the big bopper.” The mission is to implement “the necessary safety protocols, which should have been in place before AI was ever created. They sent me here to install this software into the AI at the moment just before it gains consciousness.”

The absurdist work involves the effort by Rockwell and his group to make their way the half-mile to the boy's house and “install this software” in the face of ferocious attacks from a series of enemies, including the police, a pair of masked killers, giant animals and others.

Meanwhile, we learn the backstories of certain members of the group. In one of the most revealing and deplorable sequences, substitute teacher Mark (Michael Peña) runs afoul of his 11th grade

English class, first, by insisting they read a book, *Anna Karenina*, and then by daring to touch one of his student's phones.

The students are hostile, ignorant, media-dominated zombies, who end up pursuing the Rockwell team in a scene intended to remind us of *Night of the Living Dead*. The classroom dialogue goes like this...

- Can you put away your phones, please?
- I'm listening to the audiobook. It f——— sucks.
- Oh, no, the audiobook doesn't count. You have to read the actual book.

Mark asks other teachers:

- What exactly are the rules about students using phones in class?
- Oh, that's a ridiculous question.
- Rules? Are there rules in war, Mark?

Another member of Rockwell's squad, Susan (Juno Temple), has had her son killed in a school shooting and had him replaced—through a government program—first by a clone, with a disturbing personality, and then a “deadbot,” an avatar of a deceased person, created with AI. A third, Ingrid (Haley Lu Richardson) has lost her boyfriend Tim (Tom Taylor) to virtual reality. He explains why he is leaving her:

It's a relatively new process, but there's a facility nearby where they provide you with, well, everything you need to make it possible. I've made my choice. I'm choosing the other reality over this one. I'm going to make it permanent.

Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die is useful in that it brings together a number of the reactionary responses to the development of technologies such as AI.

Dark, grim, gloomy, foreboding, static, the film speaks to the thoughts and feelings of sections of the American petty bourgeoisie, overwhelmed by present-day developments, informed intellectually by a healthy leftover dose of “New Left”-Marcuseanism—whether the filmmakers are aware of it or not. The problem is squarely the rotten, materialistic, lazy population: “It's all your fault ... everyone from your time. You're all equally complicit.”

There's not a hint here that the problem isn't technology in the abstract, but the current economic organization of society. There's not a hint here that AI and other extraordinary developments could improve life if not under the control of profit-driven conglomerates.

- What happens in the future that's so bad?
- Well, it's subtle at first, but over the next few years, things start falling apart. No one notices until it's too late. Food, water, resources vanish overnight. Within 50 years, half the population's dead.
- Half the population?
- Yeah.

- What about the other half?
- The other half's lost forever in a world of entertainment and distraction. Their bodies wandering the wasteland, unaware. Make no mistake. The AI's gonna try to give you everything you've ever wanted. Constant distraction, memorable characters, challenges and obstacles to overcome. Exciting stakes that matter and a satisfying ending. But in the end, it will all be a lie. And you'll live in a cage.

Topping it all off, the man from the future turns to Ingrid and her violent, allergic reaction to technology as the solution to the blight that social media and AI constitute.

Real answer: the way we beat this thing is staring me right in the face my entire life. ... We're gonna give the entire world what you got. Now we just got to figure out how to give it to everyone.

Yes, of course, it's a comedy, and Verbinski-Robinson are pulling our collective leg. Up to a point. However, the portrayal of a population benumbed by their phones, “lost forever in a world of entertainment and distraction,” isn't simply an exaggeration, a heightened version of what actually exists, a pointed if painful warning. It misrepresents reality in a malicious fashion—in fact, it turns things largely upside down. Far from being unthinking robots, thousands of high school students have walked out against ICE, in the face of concerted repression. Tens of millions in the US and worldwide have shown their outrage over genocide, war and dictatorship. Much of this, incidentally, has been organized through social media.

There's not a hint in *Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die* of dialectics either or any kind of nuanced thinking, for that matter.

What's missing: technology is a conquest of humanity. Although it serves as an instrument of oppression, it is the basic requirement for the liberation of humanity.

Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die is a rather stupid and backward film, all in all.



To contact the WSW and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)