



Courtesy OF Disney Enterprises

"**R**ace to Witch Mountain" is the first kids' film in ages to have action beats that measure up to Hollywood's grown-up action fare. Inspired by but not really a remake of Disney's much milder 1970s children's hit "Escape to Witch Mountain" (based on Alexander Key's novel), this "Witch Mountain" has a lot more in common with "Men in Black," "WarGames," "E.T." and "Close Encounters."

In a breathless first hour, we meet the ex-mob "wheel-man" Jack Bruno, played with toothy, kid-friendly sarcasm by Dwayne "No Longer the Rock" Johnson. The mob still wants him, but he's content to drive a cab in Las Vegas. He'll live to rue that day. That would be the day that two teenagers, Sarah and Seth (AnnaSophia Robb and Alexander Ludwig) pop into his taxi for a long, long ride.

"We require your transpiration services immediately, Jack Bruno," these odd teens say. "Head in this general direction, Jack Bruno." "We're being followed, Jack Bruno." "We do not appear to have eluded them, Jack Bruno."

## People are also reading...

- 1 [Tucson-area mom of 2, a journalist, killed in California crash at age 43](#)
- 2 [36 New Year's Eve events in Tucson to help you ring in 2025](#) □
- 3 [Tucson has an unclaimed Mega Millions ticket worth \\$1M](#)
- 4 [Longtime Tucson strip mall getting major upgrade](#)

File: 2009 03 12\_Arizona Daily Star\_Race to Witch Mountain has a somewhat alien plot.pdf

URL: [https://tucson.com/entertainment/race-to-witch-mountain-has-a-somewhat-alien-plot/article\\_ec62e089-a67f-51ac-ae0c-b02f69492a81.html](https://tucson.com/entertainment/race-to-witch-mountain-has-a-somewhat-alien-plot/article_ec62e089-a67f-51ac-ae0c-b02f69492a81.html)

## 5 Top 5 Best Testosterone Booster Supplements For Men's Healthy Muscle Gain

Jack Bruno is puzzled and perturbed. The black helicopters and black SUVs and men in black overcoats with black sunglasses are after them. Ciaran Hinds is their boss. He knows the kids don't have passports. And once Jack Bruno sees Seth stop an Avalanche — a Chevy Avalanche — he starts to understand. Just in time. There's an alien bounty hunter after something the kids are after. There's always an alien bounty hunter.

Andy Fickman ("The Game Plan") lets the viewer figure out what's going on as he cranks up the action and one-liners. The movie gallops through chases and still gives Johnson time to showcase his wry screen presence. There's a hidden passageway inside an abandoned home appliance?

"Don't go in the pimped-out fridge, Jack," Jack tells himself before ignoring his own advice.

The air doesn't go out of this balloon until the "here's the deal" explanatory scene. Fickman and the screenwriters have given us aliens in Vegas getting mixed up with a wacky sci-fi-UFO convention (a Whitley Strieber Communion cameo!), Jack Bruno beating his way past mobsters and Feds, a dandy trash-the-taxi chase and a train-flying saucer collision — all in the first 55 minutes. But when the kids reveal their "mission," the movie puckers up like E.T.'s posterior.

Carla Gugino is a "scientist" trying to share her knowledge of "real" UFOs and is enlisted in the teen plans. Garry Marshall plays a nutty conspiracy theorist. But Johnson and the kids, especially the kids, give this heart and urgency. Ludwig ("The Seeker: The Dark is Rising") and Robb, of "Because of Winn-Dixie" and "The Bridge to Terabithia," are utterly convincing as blond aliens. They don't break character and don't give away the game, even when they think they've accomplished their mission.

"What is it?"

"What we came for, Jack Bruno."

### Review

Race to Witch Mountain

\*\*1/2

- Rated: PG for sequences of action violence, frightening and dangerous situations, and some thematic elements.
- Cast: Dwayne Johnson, AnnaSophia Robb, Carla Gugino.

- Director: Andy Fickman.
- Family call: Fine for families.
- Running time: 88 minutes.

Respond: [Write a letter to the editor](#) | [Write a guest opinion](#)

---

***Subscribe to stay connected to Tucson.** A **subscription** helps you access more of the local stories that keep you connected to the community.*

Be the first to know

Get local news delivered to your inbox!

\* I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and [privacy policy](#).

## Watch Now: Related Video

