

Blu-Ray Review: Entertaining ‘Scream 4’ Makes Great Horror Rental

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 16, 2011 - 8:27pm

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CHICAGO – This upcoming Halloween will give you dozens of options in theaters and on Blu-ray to choose from for your scary dollar. You may have dismissed Wes Craven’s latest entry in the most influential franchise of the last twenty years. Don’t. Sure, the “Scream” movies are over the hill, more so than I think The Weinstein Company expected as evidenced by the pathetic box office returns (less than 50% of the last “Scream” movie and less than \$100 million worldwide (the first three broke \$150), but this is a fun genre flick. If you wrote this movie off in theaters, you might be surprised to learn that it’s worth a rental.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not here to argue that this is a return to form for one of the best horror directors of all time or that it will be anywhere near as influential as the original. It’s not great. But it works on multiple levels, especially when one considers the track record of fourth parts in franchises of any kind, especially horror. There’s no denying that this is a well-crafted film, which is something of a blessing after Craven’s “My Soul to Take,” the worst film of his career.



Scre4m

Photo credit: Dimension

Where the first film was a commentary on and deconstruction of the slasher genre, “Scream 4” is a remake, reboot, and sequel rolled into one and a commentary on all of the above. It is as self-aware a film as you’re ever going to see and if that kind of “meta” writing in lieu of actual characters grates on your nerves than you’re likely to have some frayed ones by the time the last drop of blood is spilled. It can be overly self-conscious, and I think that’s what turned off some critics. It makes dozens of film references to not just its own franchise but other horror films as diverse as “Peeping Tom” and “Piranha.” It’s the kind of script in which characters watch “Shaun of the Dead” and answer trivia questions about “Texas Chainsaw Massacre.” It is a film about the generation spawned by “Scream” – the people for whom horror movies are a language and a way of life.



After a very-clever opening set piece, “Scream 4” settles into the infamous Woodsboro on the anniversary of the action of the first film and the return of Sidney Prescott (Neve Campbell) to the town that has made her famous. Her life story was turned into a series of movies called “Stab,” based on the books by Gayle Weathers (Courteney Cox), but now she’s decided to tell her own story in her own book. Of course, what they say about not being able to go home again is especially true for horror heroines.

The list of potential killers/victims is huge (almost too big). The hapless Dewey (David Arquette) returns in the role of Sheriff with a few recognizable faces on his staff (Marley Shelton, Adam Brody, Anthony Anderson). Sidney’s niece (Emma Roberts) happens to still live in town with her mother (Mary McDonnell) and, of course, Sidney has a number of classmates ready for the end of a sharp knife including ones played by Hayden Panettiere, Erik Knudsen, Nico Tortorella, and Rory Culkin. Who is slicing up the locals again? Why now and what relation do they have to Sidney?

“Scream 4” doesn’t have the breakneck pace of the first film (or the second) but it does develop an entertaining rhythm, especially for a rental. It won’t have the influence of the original and it’s an incredibly easy film for the trolls to rip apart without really looking at it, but I can’t imagine anyone who truly loves that first trilogy to be disappointed by this clever follow-up/commentary/reboot/remake/sequel/whatever.

The Blu-ray features some interesting deleted scenes, which fans will be more curious about given the notorious and widely-reported reshoots. Being able to see the alternate ending, the other version of Alison Brie’s parking garage scene, and a different ending makes clear that reshoots aren’t always a bad thing — the final film version of all the changed material was the right choice. But it’s interesting to be able to see what could have been. It’s also great that Craven pops up all over the special features. He’s a fascinating, brilliant man and every horror movie fan should hear what he has to say.

Special Features:

- o Feature Commentary with Director Wes Craven and Cast Emma Roberts, Hayden Panettiere and Neve Campbell
- o Deleted and Extended Scenes
- o Alternate Opening
- o Extended Ending
- o Gag Reel
- o The Making Of Scream 4
- o Digital Copy Of Feature Film

“Scream 4” stars Neve Campbell, Emma Roberts, Courteney Cox, David Arquette, Hayden Panettiere, Rory Culkin, Marley Shelton, Anthony Anderson, Adam Brody, Erik Knudsen, Nico Tortorella, Rory Culkin, and Alison Brie. It was written by Kevin Williamson and directed by Wes

Craven. It is rated R and was released on Blu-ray and DVD on October 4th, 2011.



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