

Film Review: 'Insidious: Chapter 2' is Mere Ghost of Original

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 13, 2013 - 9:50am

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Rating: **2.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Writer Leigh Whannell and director James Wan reunite for “Insidious: Chapter 2,” a repetitive, cluttered, just silly variation on the first movie that will feel like a step back for anyone who admired Wan’s notable advancement as a filmmaker in this summer’s stellar “The Conjuring.” It may seem unfair to compare but with that great ghost story so fresh in viewer’s minds, failing to note how this film does many of the same things but so much more ineffectively is going to be impossible. It’s a cover version, like so many sequels, but not just of the film before it in the series but a smash hit horror movie that makes it feel even more inferior.

One has to give Wan & Whannell a bit of credit for trying to solve the common problem of the haunted house sequel inherent in the question, “They got haunted TWICE?” The follow-up to the 2010 hit lives up to its name, really running as a continuation of the first film, although Whannell makes the mistake of not really fulfilling on that promise by going back to so many of the concepts and set-pieces from the first movie. It’s a continuation in storytelling that still somehow feels like a remake but with none of the fresh approach of the first movie. Some of Wan’s ability to craft an effective scare shines through the awful script but even the talented cast is sucked into the vortex of awful writing.



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“Insidious: Chapter 2” is just a bit off from the very beginning (and sometimes more than a bit). We start in 1986 with a young Elise (Lindsay Seim, but in one of the dumbest decisions since Jaden Smith’s accent since “After Earth,” dubbed over with Lin Shaye’s voice) investigating the haunting of young Josh Lambert (later to be played by Patrick Wilson). Remember, as we learned last time, Josh has the power that his son Dalton (Ty Simpkins) does as well – to cross the yellow line that separates our world from the realm of the undead. Like Dalton, he was also haunted at a young age, working with Elise Rainier and her pal Carl (later played by Steve Coulter). And the haunting isn’t over.

At the end of “Insidious,” Josh came back from the other side and Elise was dead. But he didn’t come back the same. Josh is acting funny, refusing to respond to Renai’s (Rose Byrne) concerns that the haunting from the first film is far from over. Poor Rose Byrne is stuck with scene after scene of shocked responses to sounds in her house – doors creaking, pianos playing, toys going on, etc. “Insidious: Chapter 2” contains no first act – it’s immediate haunting and so Wan & Whannell have to stretch the ghostly scenes to the point of breaking and rely on character and realism created three years ago. It reaches the point of parody and produces unintentional laughter in the audience when poor Renai sees the ghostly figure in her living room for the fifteenth time in the first half-hour.



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“Insidious: Chapter 2” stars Patrick Wilson, Rose Byrne, Ty Simpkins, Lin Shaye, Barbara Hershey, Steve Coulter, Leigh Whannell, and Angus Sampson. It was written by Whannell and James Wan and directed by Wan. It opens on September 13, 2013.



Insidious: Chapter 2

Photo credit: Film District

Source URL (retrieved on *Mar 28 2024 - 4:24am*):

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