

Interview: Marlon Wayans Brings the Funny to ‘A Haunted House 2’

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CHICAGO – Marlon Wayans will do practically anything for a laugh, and that is to the audience’s advantage in the sequel to last year’s smash comedy, “A Haunted House 2.” Joining him for the second go around is hot comic Gabriel “Fluffy” Iglesias and the reliable Affion Crockett, who is reprising his role as Cousin Ray Ray.

‘A Haunted House 2’ was given the green light after the success of last year’s “A Haunted House.” Marlon Wayans – with his writing partner Rick Alvarez – has formulated another spoof regarding the latest horror films, in this case mostly from last year’s “The Conjuring.” Wayans, who is also part of the Wayans Brothers comedy family, leaves no hilarious stone unturned as he sends up all of the weird elements of that film, and his on-screen supporting cast brings great improvisation and comic timing to the mix.



Gabriel Iglesias and Marlon Wayans in ‘A Haunted House 2’

Photo credit: Open Road Films (II)

Gabriel “Fluffy” Iglesias is one of the hottest stand-up comics on the scene. He has worked his way since 1997, and now plays the biggest theaters all over the country, with his self depreciative brand of observational comedy. His 2009 Comedy Central Special is his catchphrase, “I’m Not Fat...I’m Fluffy.” Affion Crockett (Ray Ray) is a familiar character actor and comedian, especially on YouTube, where his videos have accumulated millions of hits.

The three co-stars of “A Haunted House 2” sat down with HollywoodChicago.com, and talked about the film and their careers surrounding it.

HollywoodChicago.com: Marlon, much of the basis for ‘A Haunted House 2’ was within the movie ‘The Conjuring.’ What was the process of understanding that was the film to go after, and writing the script?

Marlon Wayans: Initially, I didn’t want to do a sequel. But Open Road Films wanted us to do another one, so me and my writing partner Rick Alvarez started watching some horror films. We found some inspiration in ‘Amityville Horror,’ some fun things in ‘The Possession’ and ‘Sinister.’ But it still wasn’t coming together as a movie. And then I saw ‘The Conjuring’ – and that doll that’s in the first five minutes of the of the film – and boom, it all came together for me. We wrote the script in three months.

HollywoodChicago.com: Gabriel, you’ve done enough films to answer this question, what do you find most difficult in dealing with the more static or scripted confinements of doing a film versus the freedom of stand-up, and how have you adapted?

Gabriel Iglesias: The cool part about doing a film with Marlon is that you get to do a movie both ways. You do follow the script, but once you’re done with it, he turns on the cameras again and says, ‘have fun.’ As long as we get from point A to point B, whatever you do is on you. If that’s funnier than the actual script, we go with that. Marlon gives us that freedom, whereas in other films you better stick to the lines.

HollywoodChicago.com: First, Affion, how do you pronounce your name?

Affion Crockett: Aay-fee-on, thanks for asking. Most people say Ahh-fee-on and other variations. [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: How did you want to make the character of Ray-Ray memorable and more comic in the sequel as compared to the first film?

Affion Crockett: I never want to do the same thing twice, so I worked to elevate it. And people loved the character of Ray-Ray from the first film, so I didn’t want to go too outside what they enjoyed. Marlon will give the bullet points, and like Fluffy [Gabriel] said, just get from point A to B. However I get to it in my Ray-Ray way, he was fine.

Wayans: Like the scene in the beginning when he talks about the traffic tickets he has, we came up with that on set. I handed him the assignment that he had some tickets outstanding, and he came up with the rest, like ‘shave my dog’s b*lls in public.’ [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: Marlon, This filmed seemed a bit more comfortable than the first one, as far as how you planned it and how it was executed. What did you learn from the first film, that made the second that much better an experience?

Wayans: It was a better experience. We had a really strong Director of Photography on this one [David Ortkiese], and the look of the movie was much richer, like a film comedy. We strayed away from the ‘found footage’ look from the first one, we settled the cameras down. We wanted to capture more jokes, and get better coverage, because in my head I thought more coverage would make a better comedy. It was easier to find the comedy in editing with a more static camera, and a maturing in what we learned.



Affion Crockett and Marlon Wayans of ‘A Haunted House 2’

Photo credit: Open Road Films (II)

HollywoodChicago.com: Gabriel, you do a great job in the film making fun of stereotypes. Which stereotype or name bothered you the most when you were a kid, and how did you overcome it and use it to your advantage?

Iglesias: The one I heard the most growing up was ‘gordito,’ which in Spanish means chubby kid. Not necessarily a stereotype because it

was legit. [laughs] Sometimes though I was called ‘Taco.’ Now it’s different, all the mental and physical abuse that I dealt with as a kid, I’m basically getting rich on it. [laughs] If I had a nice and good life, I wouldn’t have the success I have now.

HollywoodChicago.com: Affion, you’ve been a performer from a very early age. Even though you went to college and got the degree, what was the itch that made you want to keep scratching when it came to being a performer?

Crockett: I got the degree because I knew I was getting into the entertainment ‘business.’ And I knew if I wanted to stay in business, and not have the IRS knock on your door in twenty years, and take all your assets, you need to be prepared.

Wayans: Assets! Such smart talk. Who are you? [laughs]

Crockett: I like to pontificate on my background. I’m well educated. [laughs] It was always about being in show business. I found out I had the same conversation with my Dad that Keenan [Wayans] had with his Mom, when he was leaving Tuskegee Institute. My Dad said you’ve got Plan A, what’s Plan B? I never talked back to him, but I told him ‘I have to be a man, this is my defining moment.’ I told him, why give myself a Plan B, when I know I’m good enough for Plan A? And then I told him I’m going to put all my energy into Plan A. He got beet red angry, and he told me I was crazy as hell, but that I was absolutely right.

HollywoodChicago.com: Marlon, what media do you go to when you need inspiration – either your old stuff or comedy films or anything you need to juice up your creative process?

Wayans: I will watch anything – for example, since this film was a parody of haunted houses, I watched 200 haunted house films. It goes into my brain as something dramatic or scary and comes out comedic. I’ll watch anything from ‘Ghosthunters’ on cable TV to a comedy like ‘Airplane’ or ‘Don’t Be a Menace to South Central...,’ just to stay up on my favorite comedy conventions. I need to remember what makes me laugh. It’s easier to face the blank page that way, to remember the construction for putting these jokes together.

HollywoodChicago.com: Gabriel, you risked it all in your early career to become a comedian. What was the driving force behind your decision? What was your Plan A, despite financial difficulties and your family not wanting you to do it?



Marlon Wayans, Gabriel Iglesias & Affion Crockett in Chicago
Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

Iglesias: At the time I was selling cell phones, in the day when using them was like putting a microwave signal against your head. [laughs] I was doing well, single and not paying much rent, and doing comedy by burning the candle at both ends. My Mom was fairly upset when I wanted to give it up to do comedy full time. It was the right choice. Yeah, my car got repo’ed, I got evicted from an apartment and had to sleep on my brother’s balcony. But the apartment I got evicted from, I was later able to help my roommate out with some troubles, so it all came out even, and of course my risk was worth it.

HollywoodChicago.com: What’s the first joke you ever told in front of a microphone, where was it and what was the subject matter?

Iglesias: I was about 10 year old. My first joke was ‘why did the chicken cross the road.’ And the crowd responded, ‘why?’ And I said, ‘to check out the chicks.’ [laughs] That killed when I was 10 years old.

HollywoodChicago.com: Affion, you do very well on YouTube with comic shorts. What are the parameters for keeping up with material there, and is there a danger of too much or burn out?

Crockett: If you make material that isn’t good, it flames out. I still get people tweeting me about stuff I made five years ago. Like ‘In Living Color’ reruns, it’s timeless stuff. It’s a matter of writing good stuff, and getting above the over-saturation of people on the internet trying to be funny. I have to write stuff that rises above the garbage people have to shift through.

HollywoodChicago.com: One final question, Marlon. We talked last year about a Richard Pryor biography film that you were heavily auditioning for. Do you have a status update or is it still in limbo?

Wayans: Lee Daniels has been tapped to direct the Bill Condon script I had worked on, which is awesome. I was Bill’s choice, so it will be up to Lee. For the last three years, I’ve been going around doing stand-up, to prepare for that moment. If it comes to fruition, great. If not, I’m very grateful to Richard Pryor, because I took to the stand-up stage to be as great as him, and it’s given me a whole new challenge of

greatness to attain. I will do my time, and be the best me I can be.

“A Haunted House 2” opens everywhere on April 18th. Featuring Marlon Wayans, Gabriel Iglesias, Affion Crockett, Jaime Pressly, Cedric the Entertainer, Essence Atkins and Rick Overton. Written by Marlon Wayans and Rick Alvarez. Directed by Michael Tiddes. Rated “R”



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