Film Review: Instead of Geeky Greatness, Adam Sandler Sucks the Soul Out of a Badly Miscast 'Pixels'

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CHICAGO – The epitome of an idea that far outweighs its execution, "Pixels" is a bittersweet blunder that had all of the elements to be geeky great but ends up being cheesy mediocre. I could literally *feel* its potential for 105 minutes, but the $88 million film ultimately fails to *realize* it.

Rating: **2.0**/5.0

At the heart of the issue is **miscasting** and specifically Adam Sandler's Happy Madison Productions. Even though he and his production company let me down in the critically panned "The Hot Chick," "50 First Dates," "The Longest Yard," "The Benchwarmers," "Click," "I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry" and on and on, I honestly always give Sandler a chance even though his humor almost never works for me.

Despite my love for PAC-MAN, I was disappointed going into "Pixels" to see Sandler in such a lead role with his production company attached and his pals making bank with him. Still, I had hoped he'd just be a guy in it instead of *the* guy who sets the often-unfunny tone.

But that's exactly what happened. What should have been a true geeky gamer film instead became yet another Adam Sandler production that devolves a solid premise into a cheeky, unintelligent semi-comedy. The comedy that *did* work didn't come from Sandler or his cronies, but rather from a supporting guy who's actually this film's star: "Game of Thrones" mega star Peter Dinklage.

⭐ **Read Adam Fendelman's full review of "Pixels".** [21]

Dinklage's character, Eddie, gets gamer culture. He's obsessed, narcissistic, uber competitive, always wanting to be the best, has delusions of grandeur, comes with a posse and knows how to put on a show. This certainly isn't to say all gamers are like this because they aren't, but films tend to cast an extreme light on a subject and exaggerate it for dramatic effect. Eddie, who calls himself the Fire Blaster, nails it.

Unfortunately, Adam Sandler as Brenner does not, and not a single human being on this Earth could possibly buy Kevin James as president of the United States. Among all of the U.S. presidents we've seen in film – Morgan Freeman sold it in "Deep Impact" and "Olympus Has Fallen" and so did Bill Pullman in "Independence Day" – James has got to be the worst one. Even an unusually cast Chris Rock as our president in "Head of State" pulled it off better than James, who needs to stick to physical comedy.

"Pixels" stars Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Michelle Monaghan, Peter Dinklage, Josh Gad, Dan Aykroyd, Sean Bean, Denis Akiyama, Ashley Benson, Serena Williams, Martha Stewart, Tom McCarthy, Brian Cox and Matt Lintz from director Chris Columbus and writers Tim Herlihy and Timothy Dowling. The film, which opened on July 24, 2015 and has a running time of 105 minutes, is rated "PG-13" for some language and suggestive comments.

⭐ **Continue for Adam Fendelman's full review of "Pixels".** [21]

PAC-MAN chases Ludlow (Josh Gad) in "Pixels".
Image credit: Sony Pictures

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