

## Film Review: Spirit Starts Early in Fun, Raunchy ‘The Night Before’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on November 20, 2015 - 10:33am

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CHICAGO – The tradition of the holiday party gets a workout in “The Night Before,” as three friends take a Christmas Eve walk through the environs of New York City, and make their merry journey an unforgettable night of libation enhancement, magic moments and yes, the Holiday Spirit.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Seth Rogen, Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Anthony Mackie are the three, and in a sense they’re all looking for something on the Eve of the Day. Given that this is essentially a Seth Rogen/Evan Goldberg joint (“Pineapple Express”), there is a lot of raunch as well, like cocaine blood that falls in a drink. But the whole affair has a lightness and casual humor that makes it warmer than expected, and every “movie star” worth their salt wants to have the film that will be pulled out (downloaded? implanted?) every November and December. “The Night Before” just might have the holiday legs for that Christmas Yet to Come.

Ethan (Gordon-Levitt), Isaac (Rogen) and Chris (Mackie) are best friends from high school, coming up to age 33 in different ways. But there is one thing they still have in common, every Christmas Eve they get together and go on a epic and traditional night in New York City. One time, they learned of a party called the Nutcracker Ball, but alas over the years they’ve never found it.

The gang decides, because of age and obligations, that this “night before” will be their last, and through happenstance Ethan scores three tickets to that elusive Nutcracker Ball. The evening will be consumed in getting there, but first they must score some weed from Mr. Green (Michael Shannon), settle a score with a thief (Ilana Glazer) and hope that Isaac’s pregnant wife Betsy (Jillian Bell) doesn’t go into labor. The night before does have an afterlife.

*“The Night Before” opens everywhere on November 20th. Featuring Seth Rogen, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Anthony Mackie, Mindy Kaling, Lizzy Caplan, Jillian Bell, Michael Shannon and Ilana Glazer. Screenplay by Jonathan Levine, Kyle Hunter, Ariel Shaffir and Evan Goldberg. Directed by Jonathan Levine. Rated “R” (naturally)*



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Chris (Anthony Mackie), Isaac (Seth Rogen) and Ethan (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) in ‘The Night Before’

Photo credit: Columbia Pictures



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