

‘The Hangover Part II’ a Funny, Formulaic, Desperately Shocking Carbon Copy

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on May 26, 2011 - 9:52pm

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Business and creative people go together as well as fine wine at a burger joint. Riding on the heels of the monumentally profitable “The Hangover,” the brass win out over the artists in “The Hangover Part II”.

Sequels usually fail because they’re just subpar as compared to their initial flash of genius. On the surface, “The Hangover Part II” appears to take chances by radically upping the ante on the film’s shock factor. But delving beneath the smoke and mirrors, the film actually is trying desperately not to let you down by riling you up even more.



Left to right: Zach Galifianakis, Bradley Cooper and Ed Helms in “The Hangover Part II”.

Image credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

Part two puts a new meaning to “Bangcock” when the film’s bachelor finds a woman who – if she was a Ms. Potato Head – was misassembled with one body part that makes you go hmmm. Successful comedy, though, doesn’t come from having to drop more “F” bombs or falling down more stairs. Just ask Bill Cosby. That innovator could even make the vanilla subject of his family funny.

Instead, “The Hangover Part II” falls victim to a pure game of numbers. Two years ago, the surprise hit “The Hangover” unpredictably grossed a whopping \$467 million globally on a budget of \$35 million. As sequels typically score a fatter budget the second time around after their first was highly profitable, “The Hangover Part II” more than doubled the initial budget to \$80 million.

And with more than twice as much money to work with, the stakes are even higher this time around to dish out another cash cow. That’s why the creative team behind “The Hangover Part II” was only allowed to write the same kind of material within the same exact formula as the first film. Warner Bros. already knows that equation works, so in the sequel, they figured it’d be too risky to upset the applecart with a bold new

direction.



Left to right: Zach Galifianakis and Ken Jeong in “The Hangover Part II”.

Image credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

This formula worked so well the first time because we were surprised by it. But this time, we’ve seen it before and it’s less effective. Bradley Cooper, Zach Galifianakis, Ed Helms and Ken Jeong return with mostly the same film but in a different country, with someone different to marry and a monkey (instead of a baby) that’s cute as hell. Carbon-copied elements such as the all-too-familiar elevator scene and the same cell phone picture wrap-up are the double-edged sword of disappointing and enjoyable.

“The Hangover Part II” starts right after the Las Vegas bachelor party from the first film. This time around, Phil, Stu, Alan and Doug whisk themselves off to Thailand for Stu’s wedding. Stu jokes about wanting to have his bachelor party at IHOP, but Stu’s friends refuse to let him get off that easy. Plus, there wouldn’t be another movie unless Stu’s subsequent plan for a subdued pre-wedding brunch goes atomically awry.

Of course, a comedy’s No. 1 mission is just to entertainingly make you laugh. Just as the first film scores 8 out of 10 points on the funny farm, the sequel does again. And if you’re willing to accept that part two is the same exact film just with the difference of a “two” in the title and a new girl to marry in a far-off land, then you’ll even find yourself enjoying the over-the-top shock factor, too.



Left to right: Bradley Cooper, Ken Jeong, Ed Helms and Zach Galifianakis in “The Hangover Part II”.

Image credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

While Ed Helms and Bradley Cooper continue to consume too much screen time but do help to create a strong comedic ensemble, thankfully the creepy, awkward and just-funny-to-look-at Zach Galifianakis again serves as the film’s leading comic relief. Without Galifianakis in this Jack Black-like role, these films would be devoid like a skeleton without any of its bones.

Also, supporter Ken Jeong returns in another off-the-wall performance. He’s one of the few actors who can make discussing himself in the first person seem cool. And rather than using a baby to capture your oooohs and awwwws, this one succeeds with a smoking monkey. If you’re watching nothing else, just studying the monkey’s fascinating and intricate facial expressions is worth six of your 10 movie bucks alone.

That said, “A”-lister Paul Giamatti is used in a disappointing cameo. While he has potential in a brief restaurant scene, his talent is underutilized. Giamatti should have either been more funny or more badass. Instead, he’s just a little bit of both for too short of a time. Come on, man. We’ve seen you tote a gun better than this. Remember “Shoot ‘Em Up”?

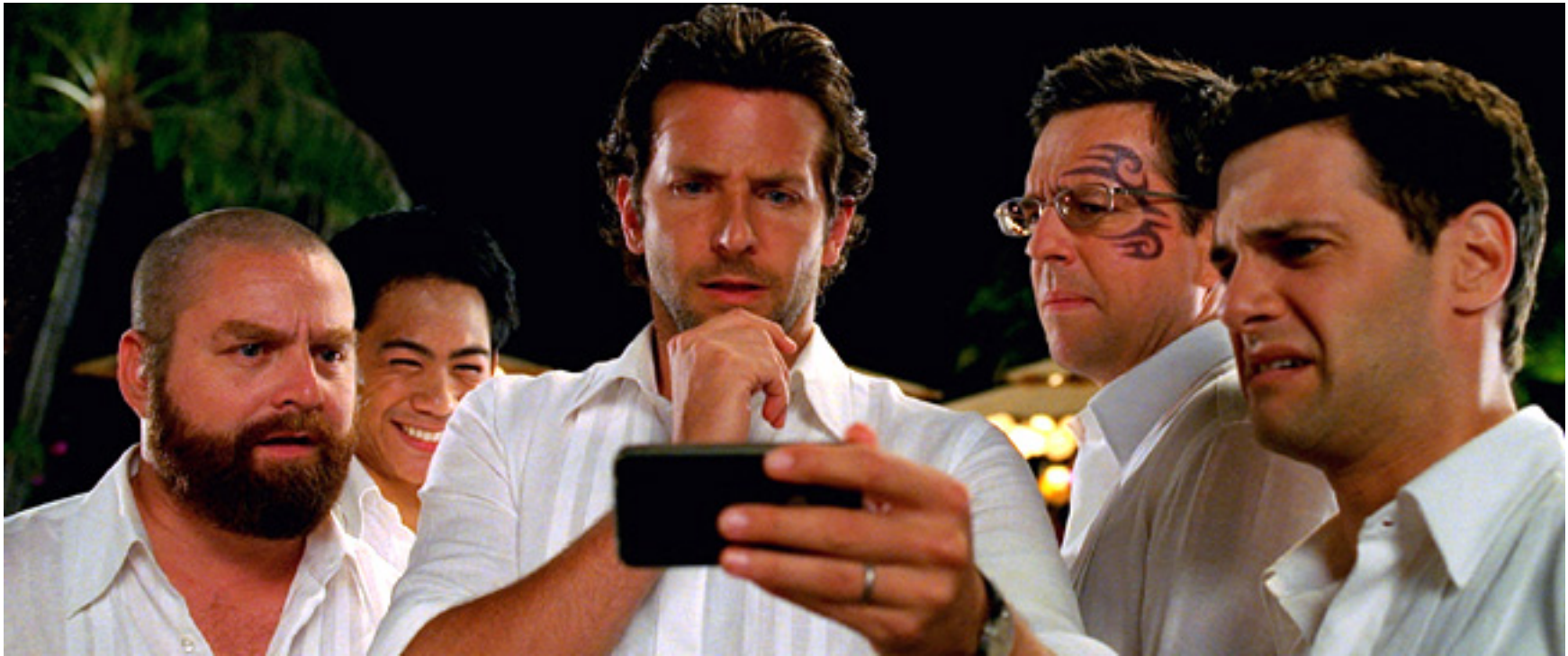


Left to right: Ed Helms, Ken Jeong and Bradley Cooper in “The Hangover Part II”.

Image credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

And while Mike Tyson’s return cameo is clearly meant to be funny, instead he offers one of the worst and most unfunny song and dances we’ve seen on screen in quite some time. The relatively unknown Mason Lee experiences an unrealistic character evolution from his initial understanding as an Ivy League-caliber beacon of light to a raucous, “I lost my finger but it’s cool” party freak.

I have very high standards for on-screen chemical romance. If you’re going to make two people fall in fantasy love, we’d better be able to buy into it. I’ve been trashing on-screen chemistry a lot lately because most attempts at Hollywood love stories have recently failed miserably. Ed Helms with wife Jamie Chung couldn’t be more wrong for each other. They have as much love for each other as a Jew does for Hitler. Their “bond” is the film’s worst joke.



Left to right: Zach Galifianakis, Mason Lee, Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms and Justin Bartha in “The Hangover Part II”.

Image credit: Warner Bros. Pictures

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Thankfully, Mel Gibson doesn’t play a tattoo artist in a gritty scene where sober Ed Helms is backtracking the steps of drunk Ed Helms from the night prior. Mel Gibson was supposed to play the tattoo artist, but he didn’t make the cut after cast and crew screamed bloody murder. Then replaced by Liam Neeson, returning director Todd Phillips ended up reshooting the scene perfectly with Nick Cassavetes.

“The Hangover Part II” is only worth your money if you loved the first film and you’re willing to fall in love again with the same formula. Or you can just watch “The Hangover” again and call it mostly the same day.

“The Hangover Part II” stars Bradley Cooper, Zach Galifianakis, Ed Helms, Paul Giamatti, Ken Jeong, Mike Tyson, Jeffrey Tambor, Mason Lee, Jamie Chung, Nick Cassavetes, Sasha Barrese, Gillian Vigman, Aroon Seeboonruang, Nirut Sirichanya and Yasmin Lee from director Todd Phillips and writers Craig Mazin and Scot Armstrong. The film is rated “R” for pervasive language, strong sexual content (including graphic nudity), drug use and brief violent images. “The Hangover Part II” opened everywhere on May 26, 2011 with a running time of 102 minutes.



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