

## Same Formula in Weak Sequel ‘Despicable Me 2’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 3, 2013 - 9:15am

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Oh those wacky Minions. We just never know what those little yellow guys in “Despicable Me 2” will do, because they simply DO EVERYTHING! They sing, fart, burp, perform parodies and handle hazardous materials. More than comic relief, they are all-purpose story coverage.

That is just one of the dull elements of “Despicable Me 2.” The formally evil character named Gru is now a family man and jelly maker, and also pretty much does everything in order to generate laughs. And with no evil to be rehabilitated from – like the first film – he is reduced to Bachelor Number One for a comely secret agent. Yes, the plot goes in more directions than a broken weather vane, with the idea to make Gru become even more domesticated. If three adopted moppets can’t do it, how about a wife? It’s possible that these animators were financed by social engineers to teach the kiddies that society must remain hitched.

The film opens with Gru (voice of Steve Carell) reveling in his newly minted fatherhood. The orphans he has adopted, Margo, Agnes and Edith, are doing what newly adopted orphans do – be cute. Gru still has his evil laboratory, with his all-encompassing work staff called the Minions, but now he only creates inedible jelly, which forces his resident scientist – Dr. Nefario (Russell Brand) – to leave the operation because it’s not evil enough.



Ah, Romance: Gru (voice of Steve Carell and Lucy (Kristin Wiig) in ‘Despicable Me 2’  
Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Things change when Gru is kidnapped by a mysterious lady spy named Lucy (Kristen Wiig), and is assigned by her spy agency to infiltrate a



local mall, where a secret formula that can transform the population into evil drones is being hidden. At the mall, Gru encounters a former colleague name El Macho (Benjamin Bratt) and a wig store proprietor named Floyd (Ken Jeong). He has to both figure out who has the formula and how to woo Agent Lucy.

There are a ton of story gymnastics, as it's obvious the creative team – writers Ken Daurio and Cinco Paul, directors Pierre Coffin and Chris Renaud – didn't really know what to do with a reformed take-over-the-world type who had already become a Daddy. Marriage is the next step, of course, moppets can't grow up without a Mommy. So surrounding that basic next step, is a bunch of strung together set pieces disguised as a plot. Animation doesn't have to be Shakespeare, but a bit of coherence or simplicity can make it more enjoyable.

The voice work of Steve Carell points out something interesting. As a performer, he's very close to becoming like his Michael Scott character on the office – eager to please, in our faces, but ultimately overstaying his welcome. His voice work as Gru has a fingernails on the chalkboard quality, sometimes in a funny way and other times like that spine-chilling noise. Benjamin Bratt is way over the top as El Macho (why Benjamin Bratt? it seems like any Telemundo star could have done it), and Kristen Wiig is at her "Wiig-iest" as Lucy.

There are silly laughs, how could there not be with a circus parade line-up of spy agencies, malls, Mexican wrestlers, toupee shops and yellow creatures nearby desperately waiting to do the comedic lifting? There is just no natural flow to it or opposition forces, as in the first movie, so what is left is Gru going to the altar (yawn) and a rehash of what was done before.



They Also Golf! The Minions Abide in 'Despicable Me 2'  
Photo credit: Universal Pictures

This is probably the type of animation farce that is not designed for adults-and-kids, but just the kiddies. The younger voices in the preview audience were laughing away, even though the kid patron behind me seemed to be a little restless (a sign?). It's a sequel, and most likely the first "Despicable Me" was on multiplay at most kid-oriented households. It's more of the same.

At one point, a yellow Minion turns blue – it has experienced the evil-making formula – and becomes a babbling, incoherent monstrous type. Not only was that funnier, but also symbolic. Inject a summer animated sequel with the same formula and eventually it becomes too much to comprehend.

*"Despicable Me 2" opens everywhere on July 3rd in 3D and regular screenings. See local listings for 3D theaters and show times. Featuring the voices of Steve Carell, Kristen Wiig, Benjamin Bratt, Russell Brand, Ken Jeong, Steve Coogan and Kristen Schaal. Screenplay by Ken Daurio and Cinco Paul, directed by Pierre Coffin and Chris Renaud. Rated "PG"*



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