

## Disappointing ‘Kick-Ass 2’ Replaces Style with Vulgar

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 15, 2013 - 11:46am

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Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – More vulgar, violent, and generally vile than the first film, “Kick-Ass 2” is one of those incredibly annoying films that actually will mar the legacy of its predecessor by association. Writer/director Jeff Wadlow entirely misplaces the priorities of the first film, thinking that the sequel needs to be more extreme, even if that’s at the expense of style and intelligence. Only another totally game performance from Chloe Grace Moretz saves it from complete disaster but it comes damn close. One could argue that “Kick-Ass” was all style and no substance. “Kick-Ass 2” has absolutely none of either.

As we’re reminded multiple times, “Kick-Ass 2” allegedly takes place in the “real world” (although none of the dialogue or comedic set-ups have the air of anything remotely genuine) as the revelation of real-life heroes at the end of Matthew Vaughn’s fun first flick opened up a universe for fill-in Wadlow to explore. While costumed superheroes roam the streets to little effect, Dave (Aaron Taylor-Johnson) and Mindy/Hit Girl (Chloe Grace Moretz) are forced back underground and into the halls of their high school. Dave doesn’t want to put those he loves, including his father (Garrett M. Brown), in jeopardy, while Mindy promised her dear departed dad (and her new guardian, played by Morris Chestnut) that she would hang up the tights. Of course, both are drawn back into the world of crimefighting.



Kick-Ass 2

Photo credit: Universal

Mindy has been skipping school every day to train and Dave comes to her looking to bulk up his Clark Kent personality to make Kick-Ass more effective. After Mindy is forced back into hiding (and into a HORRENDOUS “Mean Girls” subplot that feels like rehearsal for her upcoming

remake of “Carrie”), Dave seeks out others like him to make the streets a safer place. He finds a ragtag group of ordinary heroes, including Colonel Stars and Stripes (Jim Carrey), Dr. Gravity (Donald Faison), Night Bitch (Lindy Booth), Insect Man (Robert Emms), Battle Guy (Clark Duke), and “Remembering Tommy” (Steven Mackintosh & Monica Dolan). They vow to bring street justice to true criminals and even take down a sex trafficker.

Meanwhile, Red Mist (Christopher Mintz-Plasse) is tormented by the loss of his father at the end of the first film and seeking vengeance. When his mother dies in a tanning bed, he’s left in the guardianship of Javier (John Leguizamo), who becomes his Alfred (which might have been clever if Wadlow let it sink in instead of underlining the similarity), gathering a group of “ordinary villains” to join him, including The Tumor (Andy Nyman), Genghis Carnage (Tom Wu), Mother Russia (Olga Kurkulina), and more. Renaming himself “The Motherf\*\*ker,” Red Mist and his gang of bad guys threaten to destroy everything Kick-Ass loves, forcing Hit-Girl back into action.



Kick-Ass 2

*Photo credit: Universal*

Expanding the universe of “Kick-Ass” to include other everyday superheroes and villains was a good starting point for a sequel but Wadlow can’t make any of the supporting characters engaging or entertaining. Carrey makes the most of minimal screen time, Faison gets a couple good laughs, and Booth actually has a few memorable moments as Dave’s new love interest, but the rest range from boring to completely forgettable. Instead of expanding this universe, Wadlow reminds us that Kick-Ass, Hit-Girl, and The Motherf\*\*ker are the only characters of interest within it. If Dr. Gravity, Stars and Stripes, and Night Bitch had been stylish, clever, and engaging, the very premise of “Kick-Ass 2” wouldn’t seem so faulty.

That would have taken a much better script. “Kick-Ass 2” is one of those films that thinks it was the violence and profanity of the first film that made it memorable. Remember when Hit-Girl swore and killed a bunch of guys? Let’s do that again only more so. It’s a film for people who think having a character named “The Motherf\*\*ker” is inherently funny; for people who laugh at the c-word no matter the context. The extreme nature of the first film was balanced by its comic book style but Wadlow doesn’t have the directorial chops to pull that off. The film looks horrendous, filmed with all the flash and flair of a sitcom. And so the vulgar nature of it all feels more garish when not disguised by style.





Kick-Ass 2  
Photo credit: Universal

As lackluster as “Kick-Ass 2” is visually, it’s the script that’s the true mess. The thing moves in fits and starts, sets up villains like Mother Russia for whom we don’t give a damn (and so their big fight scenes have all the impact of watching someone else play “Mortal Kombat”), and the humor is juvenile at best. This is a film that wants to remind you that it has real consequences but also features multiple puke and shit jokes. It’s like a rock band telling you that they really want to be taken seriously as artists and then singing about doing it all for the nookie.

Thank God for Chloe Grace Moretz. She’s still one of the more interesting actresses of her generation and literally the ONLY reason to see “Kick-Ass 2.” My hope is that she knocks it out of the park in “Carrie” and we can put this behind us quickly. She probably already has.

*“Kick-Ass 2” stars Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Chloe Grace Moretz, Christopher Mintz-Plasse, Jim Carrey, Morris Chestnut, Donald Faison, Lindy Booth, Clark Duke, and John Leguizamo. It was written and directed by Jeff Wadlow. It is rated R and opens on August 16, 2013.*



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