

‘Ted 2’ is a Funnier Film Than it Deserves to Be

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 25, 2015 - 7:49pm

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Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – While it’s cruder and it can’t quite match the original “Ted,” “Ted 2” is still funnier than it has any right to be. It is unmistakably a Seth MacFarlane production, and there are a million reasons why this movie shouldn’t work, chief among them a plot that attempts to plop a foul mouthed talking teddy bear into a moralistic legal parable about civil rights. But I can’t deny I laughed throughout, almost despite myself.

It’s less a movie than a collection of scenes strung back to back. After an elaborate and largely joyless Busby Berkeley inspired title sequence, the plot revolves around Ted and new wife Tami-Lynn (Jessica Barth). When they try to adopt a baby, the government challenges Ted’s personhood and declares him property instead. So Ted and buddy Mark Wahlberg enlist a pot-smoking civil rights lawyer (Amanda Seyfried) to take his case, and win Ted back his basic human rights.



Mark Wahlberg and Ted (Voice of Seth McFarlane) in ‘Ted 2’

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Seth MacFarlane throws in a lot of racial humor as they try to make the parallel between Ted’s plight and slavery (complete with obligatory viewing of “Roots”). It’s a desperate attempt to both push buttons and provide some narrative cover – as it gives MacFarlane a stage to make courtroom wisecracks in one scene, while also making gags about the prevalence of black penises on the internet in another.

While this is slightly more tolerable than I expected it to be, the film is best when it gleefully leaves its plot behind for amusing detours that amount to slightly extended cutaway gags (a la “Family Guy”). It’s those jokes on the margins that offer the biggest laughs, whether it’s MacFarlane and Mark Wahlberg sitting around making up words to the “Law and Order” theme song, or taking a side trip out to yell inappropriate envelope pushing suggestions at an improv show. That scene alone may be the litmus test for where you stand on the MacFarlane style of humor.

Wahlberg has less to do this time around, but his rapport with Ted is still the best thing in the movie, and that helps the movie keep sailing along despite its creaky highly suspect plot. There are also plenty of one-off celebrity cameos, some lame (Jay Leno) and others downright inspired (Liam Neeson). And mixed in there are callbacks to the original “Ted,” though they are among this outing’s weakest offerings.



Jessica Barth and Ted Do Some Pillow Talk in ‘Ted 2’

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

“Flash Gordon” himself (Sam Jones) stops by for no particular reason, and for reasons known only to MacFarlane he’s decided to bring back Giovanni Ribisi for another kidnapping plot that’s even more superfluous than the original.

Based on the trailers I went in expecting a laugh-free debacle on the order of “The Hangover 2.” But I found myself pleasantly surprised. “Ted 2” is the very definition of a guilty pleasure – I laughed a lot more than I thought I would, and I am not necessarily proud of that.

“Ted 2” opens everywhere on June 26th. Featuring Mark Wahlberg, Seth MacFarlane, Amanda Seyfried, Jessica Barth, Giovanni Ribisi, Sam J. Jones, Morgan Freeman, Michael Dorn, Patrick Warburton, John Slattery, Jay Leno, Liam Neeson, John Carroll Lynch, Dennis Haysbert, Patrick Stewart and Tom Brady,. Written by Seth McFarland, Alec Sukin and Wellesley Wild. Directed by Seth McFarlane. Rated “R”



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