

God's Vajoojoo Tastes Like Semi-Glorious 'Pineapple Express' in Judd Apatow, Seth Rogen Stoner Film

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- [Adam Fendelman](#) [2]
- [Amber Heard](#) [3]
- [Bill Hader](#) [4]
- [Danny McBride](#) [5]
- [David Gordon Green](#) [6]
- [Evan Goldberg](#) [7]
- [Gary Cole](#) [8]
- [James Franco](#) [9]
- [Judd Apatow](#) [10]
- [Kevin Corrigan](#) [11]
- [Movie Review](#) [12]
- [Pineapple Express](#) [13]
- [Rosie Perez](#) [14]
- [Seth Rogen](#) [15]
- [Superbad](#) [16]



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – If god had a vajoojoo, Judd Apatow and company think it'd taste something like smoking "Pineapple Express". There's no question "Pineapple Express" is ultimately a stoner film, but is it the ultimate stoner film of our decade?

Always the most difficult proposition in a comedy is maintaining its comedic pacing with consistency.



Dale Denton (Seth Rogen, standing) and Saul Silver (James Franco, being carried) are two lazy stoners running for their lives in "Pineapple Express".

Photo credit: Dale Robinette

A comedy's goal is to sidesplittingly laugh your socks off from start to finish (and even after the credits roll). So often, though, a semi-successful comedy will instead feel like a humorous rollercoaster replete with some ups and some downs due to the inability to maintain its "A"-game material in a consistent fashion.

"Pineapple Express" falls victim to the comedic consistency trap. While the story has its heart in the right place for a film that's centered on *reefer madness* and the script successfully grows ever-more complex and ridiculous, the story needs to be sliced and diced.

For every two comedic lines that successfully land one falls short. While the film certainly has the beginnings of stoner-film greatness, it's still sometimes stifled by lines that had the potential to be roundhouse knockouts and instead were crippled stumbles.



Saul Silver (James Franco, left), Red (Danny McBride, center) and Dale Denton (Seth Rogen, right) in "Pineapple Express".

Photo credit: Dale Robinette

That said, everything successful about "Pineapple Express" comes in threes from its writing (Judd Apatow, Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg) and its primary actors (Seth Rogen, James Franco and Danny McBride).

There's a lot of talk about James Franco playing against type for this role. Based on his performance, though, this shouldn't be viewed as Franco playing against type. This should be viewed as Franco having *found* his type. For Franco, all other roles pale in comparison.

Despite his excruciatingly untalented performances in box-office monoliths "Spider-Man," "Spider-Man 2" and "Spider-Man 3," Franco's drug-dealing, always-high demeanor in "Pineapple Express" proves he indeed has acting chops that have been otherwise been hidden away. All he needed was a little Mary Jane to deliver him from acting evil.



Dale Denton (Seth Rogen, left) and Saul Silver (James Franco, right) are two lazy stoners in "Pineapple Express".

Photo credit: Dale Robinette

Now a painfully atrocious "Pineapple Express" performance by Rosie Perez – who hasn't delivered a noteworthy performance since 1992's "White Men Can't Jump" (or 2001's "Riding in Cars with Boys," but that's really stretching things) – without a doubt is the trippy film's biggest buzzkill.

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Gary Cole (her partner in crime) delivers an equally frightful performance. Amber Heard – a name you've likely never heard of before – continues trying to make her way in Hollywood after being bolstered by various "hot" ratings from magazines including *Jane* and *Maxim*.

Heard plays Rogen's much younger high school girlfriend who fits with him just as much as a Mormon fits married to a Jew. Though this film is marketed with the burgeoning star power of James Franco and Seth Rogen behind the powerful comedic name of writer and producer Judd Apatow, we are not to forget Danny McBride.

Whether you loved McBride or hated him in "The Foot Fist Way" (or have never even heard of that film), "Pineapple Express" isn't just the duo its advertising may have made you believe. McBride is the necessary tripod of this trio. Rogen co-wrote the story along with Apatow and Evan Goldberg (who also wrote "Superbad" along with Rogen).

"Pineapple Express," which is directed by David Gordon Green and is written by Seth Rogen, Judd Apatow and Evan Goldberg, stars Rogen, James Franco, Danny McBride, Bill Hader, Rosie Perez, Amber Heard, Gary Cole and Kevin Corrigan. The film opened everywhere on Aug. 6, 2008.

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[18]

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