

'A Quiet Place II' is No Echo, But a Sonic Boom of a Sequel

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on May 27, 2021 - 1:14pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – The horror genre gets a bad rap but in many ways, they've earned it. That's not to say that every horror film is inherently bad, but at the smallest sign of financial/critical success, the studios will try to franchise it like it's an IHOP. For example, let's look at the cautionary tale known as the *Saw* franchise, which recently released a film that likely none of you saw. The first two films were a revelation for the genre, combining gore but with a purpose. It was clever in its own sadistic way, while making us question our morals (or sometimes the lack thereof). If it would have stopped there, we could be looking back fondly on this film series and comment on how recent films have tried to recreate their spark but failed miserably. Instead, it's like cinematic herpes that flares up every few years to remind you it's still going strong.

As a guy I only went on 1 date with because he wouldn't stop talking about how obsessed he was with Christopher Nolan once quoted to me, "You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain." My previous bad taste in men notwithstanding, he had a point, especially when it comes to horror dynasties like *Saw*, that continue to churn out films with diminishing returns. Then again, there are special cases that tell a compelling enough story to earn a second visit, and *A Quiet Place 2* proves to be worth another vacation stay.



Photo credit: Paramount

We find our characters right where we left them; shaken, rattled, grieving, and exhausted from just having delivered a child. Putting aside how this film is a low-key endorsement to make birth control and other contraceptives more easily accessible in small towns, many other wonderfully nerve-racking moments add to the overall tension. The crying baby is a given in a world full of sound-activated, but one thing that I didn't expect to make me cringe so much was the way the original cast refused to wear shoes regardless of the very rocky/sharp terrain. Even though this film has more bare feet than a Tarantino production, it is sure-footed and intentional with its approach.

John Krasinski reprises his roles, not just as his character during flashbacks showing how everything began, but as writer and director.

Usually, this is a major red flag (See: Ben Affleck casting himself as a person of color in *Argo*) but in Krasinski's case, it turns into a study on how you can lead a film while not forcing yourself into it. Even though his character is still very much dead, he remains the story's heart but at no moment does it feel emotionally manipulative. Instead, we follow a grieving family that has already lost so much, on the verge of losing even more. The plot is nothing revolutionary, and even though the scares are competently set up, they are nothing to scream home about. Where this shines is in the character development, the representation in the form of our deaf heroine, and the sound design.



Photo credit: Paramount

As always, the adult cast of A-listers like John Krasinski, Emily Blunt, and Cillian Murphy deliver strong, grounded performances. Don't let how muted and toned down they appear deceive you because their characters are full of nuance and depth. The true standouts come in a smaller package with our younger cast members Millicent Simmonds and Noah Jupe. This chapter sees them picking up the mantle their father held when he was alive: Protector of the family. Krasinski crafts this sequel around the maturity of these two characters, giving us a great reason for another film. Simmonds' character is given an even greater chance to soar and reach a new cinematic height by giving us the first actress to be a deaf action star. That alone has earned *A Quiet Place* a third chance to explore the engaging world that has been established, and hopefully give the couple characters of color that are introduced a chance to be part of the story and not just treated as disposable.

"A Quiet Place II" in theaters May 28th. Featuring John Krasinski, Emily Blunt, Millicent Simmonds, Noah Jupe, and Cillian Murphy. Directed by John Krasinski. Written by John Krasinski. Rated "R"



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