

'Ride Along 2' Takes a Bumpy Trip to a Dead End

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 15, 2016 - 8:49am

- [Benjamin Bratt](#) [2]
- [Bruce McGill](#) [3]
- [Carlos Gomez](#) [4]
- [Eric Goins](#) [5]
- [Glen Powell](#) [6]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [7]
- [Ice Cube](#) [8]
- [Ken Jeong](#) [9]
- [Kevin Hart](#) [10]
- [Matt Manfredi](#) [11]
- [Michael Rose](#) [12]
- [Movie Review](#) [13]
- [Olivia Munn](#) [14]
- [Phil Hay](#) [15]
- [Ride Along 2](#) [16]
- [Sherri Shepherd](#) [17]
- [Spike Walters](#) [18]
- [Tika Sumpter](#) [19]
- [Tim Story](#) [20]
- [Universal Picturess](#) [21]



Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Kevin Hart’s license to riff should be revoked. “Ride Along 2” is an aimless, pointless and seemingly endless sequel to the bafflingly successful action comedy from a couple years back. Hart hijacks nearly every scene with his incessant hyperactive schtick.

This turns the entire film into an excuse for Hart to scream, squeal, and test the limits of an audience’s endurance. An entire scene is devoted to the testing the idea of just how annoying he can be before someone in the audience snaps and wishes him bodily injury. Meanwhile, Ice Cube just stands around looking down in disgust and wondering whether this movie was really worth the time and trouble.

Hart has found success in essentially two genres, buddy comedies and wedding comedies. So “Ride Along 2” is something of a Frankenstein’s monster mashup between the two. Hart is now one week away from marrying Ice Cube’s sister, and has just gotten through the police academy and is starting out on the force. Cube is the same no nonsense detective with a little more of the Danny Glover from Lethal Weapon “I’m getting too old for this shit” kind of vibe. Together they head down to Miami to investigate a computer hacker (Ken Jeong) with ties to a low level Atlanta criminal.



Kevin Hart and Ice Cube in 'Ride Along 2'

Photo credit: Universal Studios

The setup is simple. Hart wants to show he can be a real detective, Ice Cube doesn't think he's got what it takes. Hart gets into trouble, screams a little, Cube saves the day. Sprinkle in every labored pun, put down, and insult about Hart's diminutive stature. Resolve, and Repeat. There's even a more pointless subplot involving Hart trying to win some respect from his wife's Wedding Planner. Hart screams a little, gets shut down. Resolve and Repeat.

Taking a page from "Lethal Weapon 2," "Ride Along 2" adds a third wheel to the co-star chemistry in the form of computer hacker portrayed by Ken Jeong. He's got incriminating information and computer files on a prominent Miami businessman (Benjamin Bratt) who is secretly running drugs, guns and other contraband on the side. In the right vehicle, Ken Jeong can still be funny supporting player. In "The Hangover" he was funny, but by the time "The Hangover 3" came along his schtick had lost its novelty entirely. Here he's only asked to play a "Ken Jeong" kind of character, and he dutifully obliges.

The film only takes a breather from the seemingly endless riffing to stage some of the most indifferently staged action scenes in recent memory. This is a major studio movie with a \$40 million dollar budget, but director Tim Story doesn't seem to know what to do with the money. So his chases – and periodic explosions – have the bored and rote routines of someone just going through the motions.



Ken Jeong is in the Back Seat in 'Ride Along 2'

Photo credit: Universal Studios

In a movie like this, it's okay if the plot is just a clothesline to hang a series of gags, but the laughs are hard to come by here. So I started to think of things I shouldn't have been thinking about in analyzing "Ride Along 2." Such as, if Ken Jeong is a wanted man with criminals out to kill him, he sure does a terrible job of staying out of sight – he tags along in broad daylight on every stakeout and undercover operation.

I laughed exactly once – when Ice Cube compared Jeong to a third rate Jackie Chan. Even a fourth rate buddy cop comedy is bound to hit a target at least once.

"Ride Along 2" is in theaters everywhere. Featuring Kevin Hart, Ice Cube, Tika Sumpter, Olivia Munn, Benjamin Bratt, Ken Jeong, Bruce McGill and Sherri Shepherd. Written by Phil Hay and Matt Manfredi. Directed by Tim Story. Rated "PG-13"



[22]

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- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/ride-along-2>
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