

Things That Go Bump In The Night

Paranomoral Activity 2 another quality outing for the “is it real?” franchise

Unexpected, indie successes are a rare occurrence in Hollywood. That’s why it comes as no surprise that less than a year after the original breakout sensation, *Paranormal Activity*, a sequel has been released. The original was one of the highest earning films of all time, earning nearly \$200 million worldwide from a budget of \$15 thousand, and was critically acclaimed as well, which is uncommon for the horror genre. It had audiences clamoring for more, so with a new director (Tod Williams) and a bigger budget (\$3 million) comes *Paranormal Activity 2*, a film guaranteed to follow its predecessors footsteps based on its opening weekend numbers. The film follows almost exactly the same style as the first, presenting “found footage” from home videos and security cameras to tell its story. This time around we’re dealing with the family of Dan and Kristi Rey, the teenage daughter Ali, the newborn son Hunter, and their pet German Shepherd. Kristi is the sister of Katie from the first film and in an effort to spoil as little as possible, let’s just say from the very beginning things are not quite as they seem. The film mirrors the original in plot and pacing, so after nearly an hour of build-up things finally start to go haywire for the Rey family. All of these similarities are perhaps the movie’s biggest problem, a problem that is common in the horror genre: the sequel is way too much like the original. Whatever the reason may be, horror sequels almost always stick to the formula in an attempt to appeal to the audience. There isn’t anything necessarily wrong with that, especially when your first film is as unique as *Paranormal Activity* was, but it would have been nice to see some new elements or surprises added. Luckily, what it lacks in freshness it makes up with real thrills and scares. Alfred Hitchcock once said, “There is no terror in the bang, only in the anticipation of it,” and that is certainly on display here. Your eyes will stay glued to the still shots shown each night in the movie, scanning the screen for any sign, any hint of movement or a fright ready to jump on you at any moment. The dread felt in these scenes is palpable and killer. Though you know something is coming, you will still jump out of your seat when it does. Guarantee it. The entire production is still pretty solid, with all the same qualities that made many wonder if the first film was in fact a true story. So no it’s not the best scary movie ever made. And no it won’t change the minds of those who didn’t enjoy the original. But for a unique experience that is fun, creepy, and at times truly unsettling, *Paranormal Activity 2* hits the spot. Verdict: B