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Scream 2

Stars: Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox, David Arquette, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Jamie Kennedy, Jerry O'Connell, Jada Pinkett, Liev Schreiber
 Director: Wes Craven
 Writer(s): Kevin Williamson
 Premiere: December 11, 1997

Those of you reading this review have probably seen "Scream" about a zillion times each and have read all the hype on the sequel, so an introduction is hardly necessary. So without further ado, I will say it -- "Scream 2" is a rockin' movie. Scary, funny, and filled with excellent moments of true suspense.

The characters that survived the first "Scream" are back, two years from the events of the first movie, now in college. Sidney (Neve Cambell) is a drama major while Randy (Jamie Kennedy) is a film student. "Scream 2" begins with the opening of the movie "Stab," which is based on the events that happened to Sidney and friends from a book written by Gale Weathers (Courteney Cox). During the screening, a ghost-masked killer strikes out at the movie-going audience and it appears that a copycat killer (or killers) is on the loose. The media descends on Sidney and prompts Dewey (David Arquette), Gale Weathers, as well as the recently exonerated Cotton Weary (Liev Schreiber), to converge on the town.

Suspects abound in Derek (Jerry O'Connell), Sidney's preppie boyfriend, Mikey (Timothy Olyphant), the "Tarantino-obsessed" documentary filmmaker, and even the original characters -- isn't Gale a little fame-hungry? What's up with Dewey's limp?

While the "whodunnit" aspect of the movie is engaging at times, the real fun of the movie is the not-too-campy acting of the tanned and competent cast contrasted against the unabashed lengths the filmmakers go to make fun of themselves and the genre.

In "Scream," Sidney grumbles that Tori Spelling would probably play her if her life was a movie. And who shows up in "Stab"? The film is at its best when riffing on itself -- you enjoy the suspense of the "dumb blond running up the stairs when she should be running out the door" (Sarah Michelle Gellar as a not-too-bright sorority sister) and can laugh at it because, like the characters in the film, you know the rules of a scary movie and see how they are successfully doing what supposedly makes them "bad."

I liked "Scream 2" more than "Scream" for the very reason "Scream" was touted as being so brilliant -- screenwriter Kevin Williamson's ability to satirize the consciousness of our movie-saturated generation. In this second installment, Williamson gets to make fun of his own creation, and has many scenes that do this -- the sly opening with Jada Pinkett and Omar Epps have the two African-American actors talking about how horror movies exclude minorities.

"Scream 2's" self-reflexiveness only becomes a problem when it has to reveal the killer (or killers), but then the movie picks up again to finish with a violent deus-ex-machina worthy of any B-grade horror flick. In the hands of director Wes Craven, "Scream 2" is a tense ride with some tour-de-force scenes of gore and suspense. It's a movie that works on a basic level and tries hard to work on deeper ones, sometimes succeeding (the fact that Sidney has to deal with re-living the murders being done as a book and a movie and the "sequel" being created by the killers). But when it comes down to it, the best way to enjoy this movie is to not think about it too deeply.

No sequel ever surpasses the original? Well, as Randy says, it's "not a sequel -- part of a trilogy." Look forward to "Scream 3" coming to theaters just as soon as they can make it.
-- Peggy Li

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Ashlyna, 12

WOW!!!! I can't wait to see the new movie. It sounds so interesting.
And there is a "Scream 3"!!! I love the the way movies can keep
becoming interesting!

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