

Do You Want to Play a Game... Again? Movie Review: *Saw 2*

Travis Keefer

There are two things that would put off your average viewer right off the bat: one, the director, Darren Lynn Bousman, is a relatively new director (not to mention he is not James Wan, the director of *Saw*), *Saw 2* being his first big exposure film; and two, the film is a sequel. That being said, *Saw 2* is by far one of the better

sequels that I have seen in a long time. Leigh Whannell returns with the sequel's script, building upon his experience from the first film, designing even more twisted puzzles than what appeared in the first film. Bousman takes James Wan's work that established *Saw* and moves it up another step. *Saw 2* accomplishes what a good sequel should do, with rare

exception: it maintains the tone and cinematic feel from the first film, while delivering something new that an audience can truly appreciate, setting it apart from the film's predecessor.

The film opens with a particularly nasty puzzle. What else would one expect? The death of the film's first victim draws Eric Matthews,

played by Donnie Wahlberg, a troubled homicide detective with a criminally active son, into the story. Matthews is a stereotypically dirty cop, but when his son disappears, he joins the case, leading him to Jigsaw's lair, quite the Pandora's Box just like it was in the first film. From there, the cops watch a group of seven people awakening in a house, all of the new players having been infected with a nasty nerve agent and are given two hours to find the antidote before they die. Shawnee Smith returns to her role as Amanda, one of the seven in the house. We saw little of her in the first film, but in this one, she is a dominating character, claiming some of the best acting in the film. Donnie Wahlberg did an acceptable job, but as always, I appreciate a good villain. Tobin Bell, Jigsaw, receives a considerable amount of screen time, which he uses wonderfully. His prowess as the 'bad guy' is memorable and reason enough to see this film.

The one serious negative surrounding this film is that there are a large number of people trapped in Jigsaw's puzzle. In the first film, there were two principal characters, a dyad that provided as much psychological terror as their physical surroundings and predicaments provided visceral terror. For the second story to progress, I suppose this arrangement was necessary, but if you find yourself annoyed by it like I did, don't worry, they die pretty fast, showing the way *Survivor* should be played.

I have heard the first *Saw* being compared to films like *Seven*, and rightly so, even though the franchise contains many more

characteristics belonging to a horror film, but *Saw 2*, like the first, does not rely on naked hot girls and high body count to sell. The two films combined do not break a body count of fifteen that the audience knows of. The story presented is solid, with more of a gritty look into the human psyche and how extreme fear is handled: some break down, some try to fight, and in these circumstances, most die. None of what I have said means that you will like this sequel if you did not like the first film; however, there are many things in this installment that set it apart from the first *Saw*, while staying true to it. *Saw 2* also provides some quality twists that are rarely seen in films today. And, oh yes, there was blood, and it was beautiful. Do you want to play a game?

Fall Student Government Update

Beth Herbert

Happy Holidays from your Student Government Association! Can you believe that the semester is winding down? SGA finds it important for students, faculty, and administration to know what we got accomplished throughout fall semester.

Our biggest accomplishment by far was the recent addition to the Penn Gates: a game room in the lobby of Penn Gate II. That's right folks—after years of debating with the "big shots at University Park," Housing and Food Services, thanks to Karen Kreger, okayed the "Game Room in the Gates." The Game Room consists of a pool table (\$.50 to play), a flat screen T.V., and an air hockey table (which is on order, but will also be \$.50 to play). The hours of the game room coincide with R.A. hours — Sunday - Thursday 8:00 p.m.-midnight and Friday - Saturday 8:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m. If you are a student who lives in Mont Alto Hall and thinks it's unfair that the Gates got this great new facility, don't be so fast to judge. We have re-surfaced your pool table and added a foosball table to your game area! As mentioned earlier, Karen Kreger and Housing and Food Services deserve thanks, along with Residence Life and R.H.C.

SGA was looking into purchasing one, possibly two, more blue light call boxes (as talked about in the last *Fourth Wall* article). After much research, it was concluded that this can not be done this school year because of insufficient funds. It was decided to table this goal for next year, hopefully saving some money along the way to do this in the future.

As many of you noticed, SGA held elections recently for President. The Executive Board received a letter of resignation from its president Darci Newhouse. Darci is relocating to University Park for spring semester. About a week after Darci's letter came, Vice President Nolan Fontaine announced he will also be relocating to University Park for spring semester. This left SGA with no President or Vice President for Spring semester. Since one person applied for the Vice President position, he (Bobby Casiano) automatically won. There were three candidates for President — Mark Burnett, Ben Orr, and Kabura (Teri) Njuguna. After all three candidates campaigned and debated, Teri won the election. Ben and Mark will both remain involved in events on campus, though—Ben is the Information Technology Representative for SGA

Executive Board and Mark is a Mont Alto Hall Senator. On behalf of the remaining members of the fall semester, the Executive Board and Senate wish both Darci and Nolan luck at University Park and welcome Bobby and Teri to our team!

SGA has also completed many small tasks this semester—such as the addition of recycling bins to the Mont Alto Hall lobby and trashcans in the Hall's bathrooms. We have also represented the student body on numerous campus and CCSG committees. We recognized several new student organizations, and funded many club activities. We have also been busy planning a "Paws Here" program, where we will ask area businesses to give discounts to Penn State students (more to come on that next semester). In addition, we have been working on unifying ourselves in the form of matching t-shirts. We will be able to wear these to CCSG and events around campus—so people know we are Mont Alto Student Government.

If there are any questions or ideas to improve the campus, please address them to Beth Herbert, blh5014@psu.edu. Good luck with finals, and we wish everyone a nice break!

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