

## Comic-Con: "LOCKE & KEY" Pilot Talk

Written by Samuel Zimmerman  
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Yesterday, Comic-Con saw a morning screening of LOCKE & KEY, the pilot based on Joe Hill's masterful comic series (HORNS) that remains in limbo. Here's a quick look at my thoughts on the episode.

Remaining largely faithful to the series' first volume, WELCOME TO LOVECRAFT, LOCKE & KEY is the tale of the Lockes, forced to relocate to the east coast home of patriarch Rendell Locke (LOST's Mark Pellegrino) after he's gunned down by former student, Sam. Rendell's surviving family, wife Nina (Miranda Otto) and children Tyler (Jesse McCartney), Kinsey (Sarah Bolger) and Bode (Skylar Gaertner) move into Key House and in the aftermath of Rendell's death and are confronted with keys that hold the surreal, supernatural and hidden as Sam makes his way across the country to finish what he started.

The pilot, meant to start an entire series is, on the whole, not the best of adaptations. It does however showcase some great stuff that hint at something larger and much better, should the show ever be picked up. Fantastically, director Mark Romanek (ONE HOUR PHOTO, the amazing NEVER LET ME GO) was recruited to helm the introduction to the Lockes and their literal introduction is beautiful. Romanek's real talent, showcased in his feature and music video work, often shines through. The opening scenes of the Locke children on an idyllic summer day are a dream and immediately enchanting. Once residing in Key House and the youngest Bode finds the key that transforms him into a spectre, the same stunning qualities arise as he learns of his new adventure and floats through the house, observing his family.



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Unfortunately, Romanek also seems confined by the style of television. Key House is no doubt an amazing set, but much of the episode's running time fails to capture the wonder, atmosphere or dread of Hill and Gabriel Rodriguez's world. While the majority of the cast puts in fine work, McCartney just can't seem to connect to the real pain at the heart of Tyler Locke, instead opting for a constant hood over his head and constant headphone nonchalance as signs of grief. The singer/actor can't seem to hold the weight of all that Tyler's going through and, unaided by some of Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman's slightly clunky and on-the-nose dialogue, create a disappointing weak link.

Still, the potential is there. Television shows are rarely perfect off the bat and LOCKE & KEY holds the air of a piece that needs to find a groove. The pilot is strongly indicative of likely being able to do so. I didn't see the panel directly after, but apparently Hill spoke of the show turning into something of a "key of the week," which provided the continued use of such strong talent like Romanek, Otto, Bolger and Gaertner, could make for an eerie, enticing and deeply enthralling show.