Written by Samuel Zimmerman
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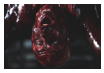

Truth be told, this is quite a difficult review to write, because despite great little moments, HATCHET II is not very good—and moreover, it’s a disappointment. However, the buzz for this sequel and the circumstances under which it’s opening make it a bit bigger of an issue than simply reviewing a film I didn’t particularly like.

First, despite my own opinion, many will love HATCHET II. It’s ingrained in their blood, and as I’ll discuss further down, I do believe the film delivers much of what they’re looking for. Second, there’s the much-publicized and hyped wide-ish release (by a major theater chain, no less) of the unrated and uncensored version. It’s the biggest debut of its kind in some time, which, depending on how you feel about the subject, could render harmful opinions irrelevant. Some might feel it necessary to sidestep negative reactions to support what could be an exciting first step in larger rollouts of unrated, challenging and alternative cinema.

As many fans already know, HATCHET II (once again written and directed by Adam Green) begins the moment the first ends, with Marybeth (now essayed by the much-adored Danielle Harris) being terrorized in the water by Victor Crowley (a returning Kane Hodder). Upon escaping, she’s taken in by Louisiana swamp recluse Jack Cracker (John Carl Buechler, also encoring), who’s happy to help—until he learns just whose daughter she is, foreshadowing all that the audience is about to learn of the origins of the swampland slasher. Before he himself is dispatched in one of the film’s best deaths (in fact, no matter where you sway on the rest of the movie, it’s hard to dispute each kill is pretty great), Jack directs Marybeth to the abode of Reverend Zombie (Tony Todd, whose cameo presence in the first is beefed up considerably to second lead), who will make everything much clearer for her. What results is a host of secrets revealed about Crowley, his father, his birth and his death—and the decision to round up a band of hunters to take out the monster once and for all.

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