

“QUARANTINE 2: TERMINAL” (Film Review)

Written by Michael Gingold

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QUARANTINE 2: TERMINAL is not only a superior sequel, it's a superior sequel to a remake, which is one reason it has escaped a direct-to-video fate to land in select theaters starting this Friday. Diverging completely from [REC] 2, the follow-up to the movie that inspired the first QUARANTINE, it mixes up familiar ingredients to deliver a tense, scary and bloody ride.

While it doesn't head back into the infection-ravaged building like the second [REC], it does pick up on the same night as its predecessor's action, taking us on board a small commercial airliner making the red-eye (heh heh) from LAX to Nashville. As the pilot and co-pilot prepare for takeoff and the two stewardesses get the small assortment of passengers ready for the flight, writer/director John G. Pogue, knowing that we know one of these people has brought the super-rabies on board with them, has fun teasing the audience as to just who it might be. The virus doesn't make its effects known until they've been up in the air a little while, of course, leaving our heroes and heroines in even more of a confined situation than those of the previous film.



Given QUARANTINE 2's subtitle, it's not giving anything away to say that the plane eventually makes an emergency landing at another airport, yet the group's plight is just beginning. Those who are infected try to restrain and isolate those who aren't, but that's easier said than done, and they also become distracted by their attempts to figure out who's responsible for the outbreak. As in his story's introduction, Pogue effectively keeps us guessing as to who's got the bug, and jumping when those who do suddenly explode into fits of manic violence. Returning makeup FX creator Robert Hall and his Almost Human team do another fine job of keeping the devolving victims convincingly ghastly, and contribute a few painful-to-watch injury gags—one bit of close-up nastiness in particular will challenge anyone's ability to stay still in their seat.

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Following the lead of the first QUARANTINE, this film abandons the religious underpinnings of the [REC] duo and adheres to the basics of the infection subgenre—which means that, of course, hazmat-suited military goons get involved before too long. Pogue dispenses with this *d e rigueur*

element swiftly, however, keeping the focus on his suffering civilians. This sequel also eschews the found-footage gimmick that has marked the parallel franchises, and though Pogue and cinematographer Matthew Irving (whose credits include another foreign-chiller remake, THE ECHO) utilize handheld camerawork throughout for extra tension, they keep the shaky-cam indulgences to a minimum. Most notably, Pogue completely avoids exteriors; there are none of the expected shots of the stricken plane in flight, nor any of the airport as it falls under quarantine. We’re stuck inside with the protagonists throughout, which helps us identify with and fear for them.

Also helpful in that regard is that there isn’t a familiar face among the ensemble, so that passengers and crew alike come off as regular folks facing an extraordinary and horrific situation. And since no one is clearly the star, it can’t always be predicted who’s gonna succumb to the madness and who might make it out alive. There are folks who are clearly earmarked from the start to fall victim, certainly, and QUARANTINE 2: TERMINAL is more notable for the craft and panache brought to the material than for any great twists it brings to the trapped-with-slavering-ghouls subgenre. Right down to its satisfying tense finale, though, it rises above the restrictions of its formula and justifies its escape to the big screen. You can see a listing of the theaters where it’ll be playing at the [official website](#).

