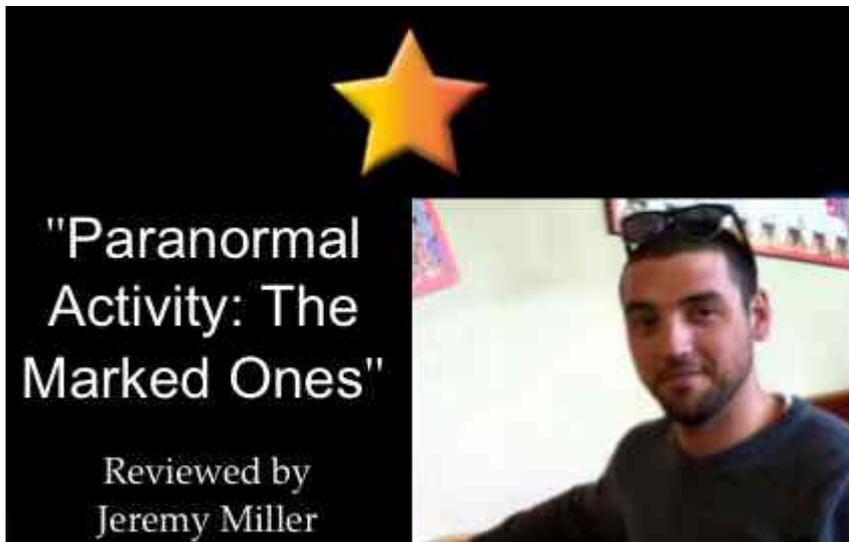


'Paranormal Activity' not worth the money



By Jeremy Miller

"Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones" is the newest installment of the Paranormal Activity franchise. Written and directed by Christopher Landon (who's responsible for Nos. 2, 3, and 4) the story surrounds a trio of teens.

It stars Andrew Jacobs, Jorge Diaz and Gabrielle Walsh.

Warning: This review has spoilers toward the end.

Jesse (Jacobs) and his pals Jorge (Diaz) and Marisol (Walsh) are going about their daily business when out of the blue his downstairs neighbor is murdered. Upon investigation he develops a mark on his arm and some pretty fun new abilities. Things start to get weirder and weirder, as they typically do when demonic possession is at play, and Jesse's new abilities seem more like a curse than the next YouTube sensation.



The crew decides to take action by investigating downstairs. They discover a super creepy book full of demonic illustrations and witchy nomenclature.

Like every single other horror movie in existence they don't stop there.

Now, I have enjoyed the paranormal flicks thus far. They progressively get worse, as most horror film series do, but I still enjoy them. Where this one went wrong was plot. You come to discover that what's happening is much bigger than some creepy girlfriend getting possessed and killing her boyfriend. It's actually a band of witches who put a spiritual entity into unborn babies and then "harvest" it 18 years later. Their goal? To eventually breed an entire army of spirits all over the world. So, there's that.

Once the crew tied it all together and I discovered that's where this is all going, they lost me completely. These witches eventually kidnap Jessie as his demon is ready to be pulled from his body. Marisol and Jorge call upon the services of some hard-hitting gangsters they know through an old friend. The two gangsters, along with Jesse's friends mob out to the house we saw in the fourth film to seek vengeance and pull Jesse out. They pull up to the house with some firearms and start looking.

Here is where it really lost me. As they're walking around, all of a sudden there's a witch standing there and boom! Blown

away with a shotgun! There's another one? Boom! Hit pointblank and thrown 9 feet back. This guy goes on a shooting spree just blasting witches left and right. Savage.

Now, that's awesome, and I was laughing harder than I have in a while, but this isn't a comedy. Right? Darn. It just gets worse.

Suddenly as Jorge realizes that Jesse is long gone, he runs around like an idiot (passed over a dead gangster's gun) and ends up stumbling through a demonic, time traveling sort of portal and ends up in a house. Whose house? Katie's! Oh, man! We're back in the first one.

Katie comes creeping down the stairs; Jorge scares her and when Micah sees some dude in his house, Katie stabs him, not the obvious choice of the creepy dude who magically appeared in their kitchen.

Role credits, and that's it. Wow. If I really put my head to it, I could probably understand the correlation, but honestly, if they're trying to complicate it that much, it's because they know they don't have a movie. On a hot summer day, I love an ice cold Coke with lime. Problem is I only have one lime wedge. I squeeze and squeeze and I can see that nothing is coming out, but I keep trying. I have to get that Coke with lime. OK, I finally squeeze it to the point you can't even tell that thing was ever a lime wedge, take a sip and ... can't even taste it. Get it? The template for Hollywood moneymaking is perfectly summed up right there. Catch it on the RedBox and until then; avoid creepy witch books, Simon says, and senile old woman painting manikins planning your next birthday.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews online.