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REEL WORLD



Return to Zombieland

Big stars are back for undead sequel

Since the release of the first *Zombieland* back in 2009, much has happened in the entertainment land of the undead. A little show called *The Walking Dead* premiered on AMC in 2010 and, sadly, the zombie maestro himself, *Night of the Living Dead* creator George Romero, passed away in 2017.

by
Bob Grimm

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**Zombieland:
Double Tap**

Starring Woody Harrelson, Emma Stone, Jesse Eisenberg and Abigail Breslin.
Directed by Ruben Fleischer. Cinemark 14, Feather River Cinemas.
Rated R.

A lot also has happened in the careers of the film's stars: Jesse Eisenberg was nominated for an Oscar, Emma Stone was nominated for three, and Woody Harrelson added a couple of Oscar and three Emmy nominations to his credentials. With all of this awards business, one might think this crew of performers would opt for more sophisticated fare than blowing up ghoulish skulls for laughs.

Nope. Director Ruben Fleischer returns with the whole crew intact (including young Abigail Breslin) for *Zombieland: Double Tap*, a film that does little to reinvigorate the genre, but still delivers plenty of laughs and zombie gore to merit a viewing. It's basically the same as the first movie, with a little less originality and a little more comedy thanks to a new co-star.

It's 10 years later, and the rag-tag zombie-killing team has taken up residence in the abandoned White House. Wichita (Stone) and Columbus (Eisenberg) are in a relationship (they cover up the eyes on the Lincoln portrait when they bed down at night); Tallahassee (Harrelson) is still searching for Twinkies and has a

new goal of visiting Graceland while leaving shredded zombies in his wake; while Little Rock (Breslin), now 22, wouldn't mind having her first boyfriend.

The basic story involves a zombie-killing road trip that leads to Graceland (sort of) and then a commune called Babylon, with a lot more zombie killing.

Along the way, fun new characters are introduced, including Nevada (played by Rosario Dawson), owner of an Elvis-themed hotel, and Albuquerque (Luke Wilson) and Flagstaff (Thomas Middleditch), two zombie hunters who look and sound an awful lot like Columbus and Tallahassee.

The best, though, is Madison, played by Zoey Deutch, a "valley girl" type who has survived all these years living inside the freezer of food-court yogurt shop in a decimated mall (an ode to Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*). Columbus and Tallahassee encounter her while riding Segways through the mall, and she is a total crack-up. Whenever the film threatens to go a bit stale, Madison will swoop in decked out in a pink leisure suit with fake fur (she's also a vegan) to liven things up.

Of the returning big stars, Harrelson appears to be having the most fun, even going so far as to provide a decent cover of "Burning Love" over the closing credits. Eisenberg is basically doing his usual shtick, but it works.

As far as bringing new ideas to the zombie genre, other than the "T-800" superzombies (named for the model of hard-to-kill cyborgs from *Terminator*), who keep coming even after the double tap and require extra shots to take down, the film is pretty standard issue when it comes to carnage of the undead.

Will there be another *Zombieland* 10 years from now? This one strikes me as a last hurrah, and a pretty fun one at that. □

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