

Movie Review: The X-Files - I Want to Believe

Written by {ga=mitch}

Monday, July 28 2008 7:00 PM -

When we assigned Mitch the review of the new "X Files" movie, he warned us that he was not a fan of the show when it was wildly popular on TV. But his wife Clarissa? A complete addict of the series and big fan of the first X Files film. So they tag teamed this review. Mitch giving us the perspective of someone emotionally detached, and Clarissa the perspective of the obsessed fan of Mulder and Scully. The Cyruses review "The X-Files - I Want to Believe".



By Clarissa and Mitch Cyrus

Prologue:

This is a movie that is almost impossible to review objectively. It is a movie that is based upon a quirky television series that went off the air six years ago.

Full disclosure: I have never watched a single episode. I never saw the first movie ten years ago.

Therefore, how could I possibly review this movie objectively?

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I really can't. I can only give my perspective as a total neophyte, which is probably going to be near worthless for someone who has at least a rudimentary understanding of the series.

However, my wife Clarissa is a complete addict of the series (at least until Mulder left the series...I have no idea what that really meant, or when, but I'll take her word for it).

Therefore, the best thing I can think of is to split this review into two parts; Clarissa's opinion as an X-Files fan, and my opinion as someone completely clueless (which Clarissa might claim to be my normal state of being).

Clarissa Says:

As an avid X-Filite in years past, a dream come true-Mulder and Scully together again!!!

While waiting for the movie to begin, I recall some of those episodes in the series that are unforgettable: "The Host", "Beyond the Sea", "Darkness Falls", "D.P.O.", and "Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose" to name a handful.

Sitting in the theater, hearing the first notes of the X-Files theme music, I'm ready to suspend reality, as one must to appreciate The X-Files. I see the words typed across the screen SOMERSET VIRGINIA, and the nostalgia of the series takes hold of me.

All of the required X-Files elements are here-abductions, a psychic, a mysterious

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laboratory, Mulder's belief in the paranormal, and Scully's insistence that there is a scientific explanation for all things unexplainable. The FBI needs Mulder's help in an abduction case and are willing to "forgive everything" if he'll assist them.

Positives: Both David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson settled back into their roles as Fox Mulder and Dana Scully as if there hadn't six years since they'd last acted together.

Billy Connolly provides a riveting, but understated, portrayal of a pedophile Priest claiming to have psychic abilities.

Negatives: Amanda Peet gives a lackluster performance as ASAC Dakota Whitney who is more interested in getting to know Mulder than solving the case, while Alvin "Xzhibit" Joiner's performance can only be described as weak.

The strong performances given by Duchovny, Anderson, and Connolly helps forgive Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz for not turning in the tight plotline that kept The X-Files at the top during the first five seasons of the series. Even with a less than stellar plot, I enjoyed watching the movie. It truly was entertaining and absolutely worth viewing. As my son was leaving the theater with me, he commented "it was like watching an extended version of the television show". Well, I believe that's what the goal was and.....mission accomplished!

Mitch Says:

I haven't been this lost since I missed an exit on the Tube in London, and I think I ended up in Edinburgh.

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We start right off diving into characters and relationships that fly over my head faster than a Joe Borowski "fastball" flies over Grady Sizemore's. I know who Scully and Mulder are, although I'll admit that I sometimes forget whether Mulder was the girl or Scully. You would think the first name of "Fox" would help, but not when we've just had Angelina Jolie playing a female character called Fox in "Wanted".

Evidently, Scully and Mulder have left the FBI's freak show investigation unit. Scully has settled into being a renowned surgeon, and Mulder is channeling the Unibomber in his mountain hide-away. I'm wondering how someone six years removed from being an FBI agent can now be so high up on the surgical food chain, but I'm told that Scully was already a medical doctor during the TV run, so I guess everything is OK.

They both get drug back into the world of weird to see if a pedophile former priest (Billy Connolly) is really having psychic visions concerning the whereabouts of a missing FBI agent, or if he's a fraud.

Overall, the movie plays like a jumbled up mix of "Fargo", "Silence of the Lambs", "Lost", and "Kolchak: The Night Stalker", combined with "Cheers" level sexual bantering between the two leads.

I came in expecting all kinds of paranormal strangeness, but there was really very little in that regard. Connolly's character of Father Joe did have his eyes cry blood at one point, but not much more than that until near the end when creator Chris Carter falls back on the most hackneyed of villains; Evil Russian Scientists conducting some truly bizarre experiments on humans.

I wasn't in on all of the inside stories, which made things worse. Something about Mulder's sister being gone/dead...something about Scully and Mulder's child, which I'm assuming died...something about an Agent Skinner which thrilled the

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daylights out of my wife. I had no idea what the back stories were, and there was no real effort by Carter to fill in those blanks.

As a suspense movie, it worked pretty well in the final 45 minutes, enough so that I stopped looking at my watch every five minutes and actually paid attention. This ending bumped the score up from Spergon Wynn territory up to the final grade I'm giving it: Tim Couch (1 ½ footballs).

There has been only one other film I've seen that was based off a television show that I never watched; 2005's "Serenity", continuing Josh Weldon's "Firefly", a quirky Sci-fi/ show with an old Western feel. To me, the differences were substantial. With "Serenity", I was able to quickly understand who the major characters were without too much detail that would have bored those familiar with the show, and then quickly got into the story.

After I watched "Serenity", I was stoked enough to go back and view the entire (brief) run of the television series.

In comparison, after watching "X-Files: I Want to Believe"...I don't believe I'll be adding any episode from any season of this series to my Netflix Queue.

Bottom line...if you weren't much of a fan of the original series; take my advice and stay away. But if you were a big fan, then listen to what Clarissa has to say about it and go.