

Robocop 2 ★★

Year of Release: 1990

Review by Randy Parker

Country: USA

Verdict: Skip It

For a while, *Robocop 2* promises to live up to its predecessor, the inventive tale of a murdered cop brought back to life as a cyborg, part man and part machine. Under Paul Verhoeven's stylish direction, *Robocop* was a novel combination of comic book heroics, gory action and black humor.

The sequel begins with a brutally funny television commercial in which John Glover pitches a high-tech car alarm. In fact, the entire first hour is fairly satisfying. The movie picks up several loose ends which were not adequately resolved in the original, such as whether Robocop, played again by Peter Weller, is simply a machine following a computer program or whether he is still human, with emotions, thoughts and memories. Unfortunately, half way through, *Robocop 2* drops these plot strands and degenerates into a senseless barrage of explosions, gunfights and special effects.

Like *Total Recall*, *Robocop 2* assaults you with so much violence that you become numb and apathetic. The difference is that in *Total Recall* you become apathetic only to the violence itself, whereas in *Robocop 2* you just become apathetic in general.

Robocop 2 was co-written by Frank Miller, the author of several graphic novels, including "Batman: The Dark Knight Returns." As a comic book writer with a talent for telling sophisticated stories, Miller was an intriguing choice to write *Robocop 2*. Regrettably, Miller's first attempt at screenwriting is a major disappointment. The sequel's plot is feeble and fragmented. In fact, it really contains two story lines, both of which are woefully half-baked.

Miller attempts to recreate the intelligent social satire which made the first film so intriguing and entertaining. Like the original, the sequel uses TV newscasts and commercials to spoof society. Unfortunately, the television parodies generally seem tacked on; the humor is not only forced, but also awkwardly incorporated into the movie. *Robocop 2* is a victim of sloppy editing.

About all the movie has to offer is some remarkable stop-motion animation, but the film's hollow story line makes its technical achievements seem pointless. The net result is a movie as cold and mechanical as the robots it depicts.