

# 'Big Momma's House 2' doesn't draw big laughs

By Kam Williams  
Sentinel-Voice

The first "Big Momma's House" was a charming comedy in which Martin Lawrence impersonated an enormous, elderly woman whose grand-daughter, Sherry (Nia Long), were in the Witness Protection Program and being stalked by a murderer.

That comic crime caper, set in the in a quaint town in rural Georgia, managed to make the most of a very colorful cast of supporting characters played by such talented actors as Terrence Howard, Paul Giamatti, Anthony Anderson and Cedric the Entertainer.

Despite Martin's unconvincing makeover from Agent Malcolm Turner into



Martin Lawrence (holding hair) is back in drag, for the sequel to his comedic crime caper.

a drag queen, the movie had enough hilarious moments to gross over \$100 million at the

box office. But besides leads Lawrence and Long, no other original cast members were

signed on for this sorry sequel, not even the actress who portrayed the real Big

Momma (Hattie Mitchell) or the kid who played her great-grandson (Jascha Washington).

In fact, Nia's role has been radically reduced to a wrap-around role as Malcolm's very pregnant wife.

As a result, "Big Momma 2" is a Martin Lawrence vehicle in the pure sense of the word, as he gets no help from any gifted comedians like he did the last go-round. The movie takes place in Los Angeles, where Malcolm has taken a desk job in deference to his wife's concerns about his dangerous profession.

However, after his partner is slain by a computer espionage ring, Malcolm throws caution to the wind and decides, unilaterally, to bring the perpetrators to justice. So, he dusts off the fat suit and applies for a job as a nanny in the home of the prime suspect.

But what Malcolm didn't count on was that that trying to tend to the creep's three kids would turn out to be as challenging as cracking the case.

I sat stoned-faced throughout the duration of this humorless adventure,

from Malcolm's blackmailing his employers to get the job ("I got Al Sharpton on speed dial") to the mean-spirited way he makes fun of White people dancing ("flailing like a couple of stroke victims").

Worse than its absence of wit or charm, the movie's preposterous premise tests the bounds of rationality at every turn.

Why does Malcolm lie to both his wife and his boss about going back undercover? Why does he choose to dress in drag again, when it was totally unnecessary? Why does he claim to be half-Jewish? Why would he fill a beloved pet dog's water bowl with Tequila? And why, after all the trouble he goes through to catch the murderer, would he then intervene to keep the killer out of prison?

No logic, no laughs, a classic "take-the-money-and-run" sequel which had me praying for a projector malfunction or some other excuse to leave the theater early.

Fair (1 star). Rated PG-13 for coarse humor and a drug reference)

## Ex-member of Supreme targets imposters

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) - A former member of Motown group The Supremes has a warning for copycat musical groups: Stop, in the name of fraud.

Mary Wilson has urged Illinois lawmakers to make it illegal for impostors to perform as original artists.

Wilson's visit was part of a national campaign to get bills passed in several states that would ban knockoff groups. The goal is to eventually make it a federal law, she said.



MARY WILSON

"They've crossed the line between imitation and flat-

tery to becoming almost like identity theft," Wilson told a House committee Tuesday. The committee later unanimously endorsed a bill that will be sent to the House for a full vote.

South Carolina and North Dakota have passed similar laws.

Wilson, who sang with Diana Ross in the 1960s trio, said she has filed several civil lawsuits against groups claiming to be The Supremes. But she lost all the cases, she said, "because

there were no laws to protect me." Many early performers no longer have rights to their work or famous names because of the language in contracts they signed, said Bob Crosby, president of the Vocal Group Hall of Fame, one of the groups behind the campaign.

## Ray J

(Continued from Page 8)

Ray J: Nah, I never shot at anybody. I didn't take it there. You know I was only 13, 14.

AP: Have you ever see any of your friends shot?

Ray J: One of my friends got shot in my truck. My best friend now, Shorty Mack, he's on my label, my hype man, my rapper, he got shot in the stomach and the arm with a .45 in my truck. I never really mentioned it, because it's hard for people to believe, and I think sometimes it's irrelevant with what I'm trying to do right now. But if people want to know, I'm never afraid to tell them what happened.

AP: Your voice has been compared to Ralph Tresvant's from New Edition.

Ray J: That's cool. I heard that one time, that's a good look. I was a New Edition fan.

AP: Why name the album 'Raydiation'?

Ray J: It's a cleansing. I needed to be cleaned. I needed to clean myself from

all my demons. All my bad vibes and just build back on being confident again. There was a time when I just stopped being confident and started thinking about other things.

AP: Brandy is coming out with an album on your label, Knockout Entertainment?

Ray J: I'm structuring the deal with her, because she co-executive produced my album and she invested time and money, too. So I'll invest money into her album, I'll get my cut and be a part of it.

AP: You know who speaks very highly of you? Karrine Stephans (the tell-all groupie author).

Ray J: Kerrine Stephans? AP: Superhead?

Ray J: Oh, oh, oh, yeah. She's cool.

AP: Was there any love there?

Ray J: Love like 'in love?' No, we had fun together. I was at my peak of being wild and she helped me be wild. We had a great wild life together; it was fun, exciting, exotic; it was very, very, very intense as far as just being

wild. I was 18, 19, at my peak of exploration and finding out things about women, life and fun. And she helped me.

AP: You're into older women?

Ray J: I love older women. I've never dated a woman younger than me.

AP: Sometimes when you say the name 'Ray J,' people chuckle.

Ray J: That's what they do?

AP: Sometimes. Have you ever felt people don't take you as seriously as you'd like?

Ray J: I feel jealousy. I feel hatred. I feel envy. I feel disbelief. But that's the challenge. I look at this game as a card game, a domino game, a chess game. It's a game. A challenge. And can you overcome that challenge. You can complete your mission. It's a beautiful thing to have somebody not believe and then a year from then, they believe and support and love. That's the challenge. To make somebody believe and change people's minds. Time tells everything.

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