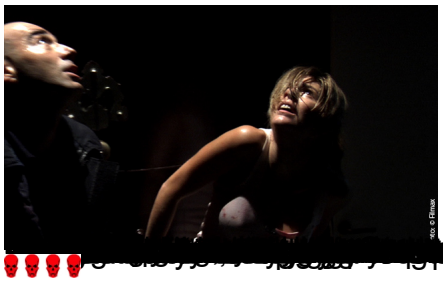
Since [REC] 2 is debuting on DVD this Tuesday, July 12, we thought it would be a good time to look at Michael Gingold’s glowing review of the original Spanish classic that inspired not only the American remake QUARANTINE, but [REC] 2 and a pair of upcoming sequels.

This is gonna be a fairly short review, because all that really needs to be said is that [REC] is an absolute must-see, a ferociously intense, compellingly well-crafted exercise in scaring you right out of your seat. Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza’s movie is a triumph of you-are-there terror.

Part of the achievement of the two directors (who scripted the film with Luis Berdejo) is the fact that they have spun such a gripping and shocking experience out of basic ingredients that are by now familiar to fright fans. [REC] is presented entirely through the camera lens of Pablo, the cameraman accompanying Ángela (Manuela Velasco) on her late-night news program WHILE YOU’RE ASLEEP. On a routine show covering a Barcelona fire department, on a night when nothing terribly exciting at first seems to be going on, the station gets a call to investigate reports of a screaming woman, and Ángela and Pablo tag along to the small apartment building from which the call came. The narrative setup is reminiscent of forebears from THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT to CLOVERFIELD—ordinary, bordering on banal, footage with no signposts of the terrors to come—but it succeeds in allowing us to get to know its central characters before all hell breaks loose.



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