

MOVIES

Veronica Offers a Personal Narrative on the Exorcism Movie Genre

By Murjani Rawls @murjanirawls On March 21, 2018

Exorcism movies have been *interwoven* into the horror genre fiber since 1973's 360-degree head-turning classic *The Exorcist*. This is most recently shown with the Conjuring universe. These types of stories keep coming back around because horror fans are attracted to the unknown possibilities. Throughout history, there have been "real" accounts of exorcisms, so there are many stories to draw from. The question and overall challenge is shared from a horror subgenre like zombie movies. When an audience has seen all possible instances of something, how do you keep it fresh?

Director **Paco Plaza** is best known for his work with the *REC* film series chronicling a zombie outbreak with a found footage twist. *Veronica*, which was a surprise release on Netflix, is a complete departure from that into a more centralized story. There's a brief introduction where it's stated that the movie is based on true events, but that's as much into the previous found footage realm as you would get.

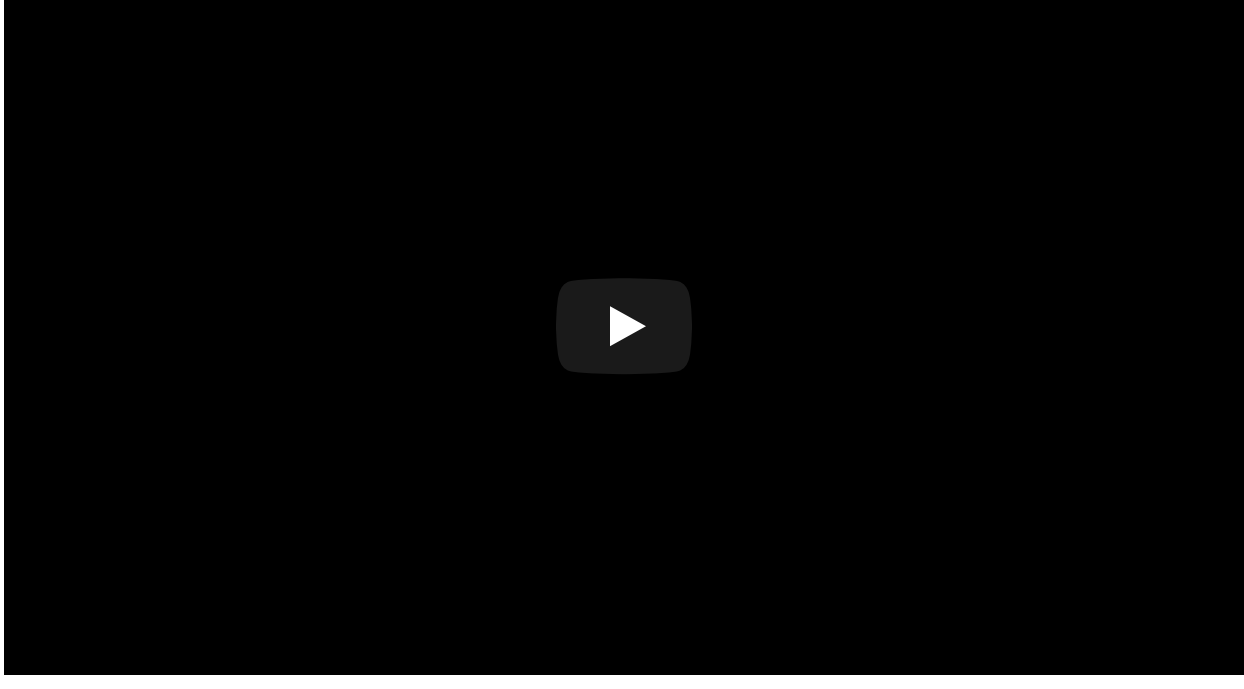
Veronica (**Sandra Escacena**) and her friends, Rosa (**Angela Fabian**) and Diana (**Carla Camera**), decide to channel spirits within the basement of their Catholic School during a solar eclipse. From there, a slow burn of all hell breaking loose begins and Veronica's psyche begins to break down in dealing with this unknown entity. Now, we never get a sense of who the entity is or why it's just impacting Veronica. The movie asks a lot from the audience in living within the moment instead of venturing into a backstory. It both helps and hurts the horror narrative of the movie.

One thing that *Veronica* serves to do different than the more straightforward exorcism movies is the emotional attachment to the main character, Veronica. This 15-year-old girl is basically a full-fledged matriarch to her two younger sisters and one younger brother. This entity is brought on by accident. It's from Veronica wanting to contact her father and the real lack of a parental figure. It gets to a point where Veronica seeks the most guidance from Sister Death (**Consuelo Trujillo**), a blind nun that presides conveniently in the basement where the seance went down. On this journey, *Veronica* starts to lose a lot of personal things like friends and semblance of who she is. The one thing that keeps her going is protecting her siblings — a sad, selfless irony.

If you've seen an exorcism movie, you'll be familiar with many of the scare tactics: a movement of someone's belongings, a shadowy figure in the corner, etc. There are a couple interesting points dealing with silhouettes, but nothing that is truly groundbreaking. *Veronica* does its best when it deals in building tension instead of the overt scares. **Chucky Namanera**'s score gives the movie gives the movie's scary parts the push they need, even though you may have seen them in some variation. The score also gives a vintage coating that resembles, at times old westerns/Twilight Zone.

While it may not be the "scariest movie on Netflix," *Veronica* does do most things right. The performance of Sandra Escacena is good enough to draw you into the character's plight. The language barrier will not deter from the movie either. It may not reinvent the wheel as far as exorcism movies go, but it gives a sense of melancholy that hits close to home.

Featured Image Credit: Toronto Film Festival



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OVERALL SCORE

Veronica

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Journalist, Self-published author, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls is always looking to stretch his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the New York area, Rawls has photographed artists spanning many genres from Slipknot, Kendrick Lamar, Marc Anthony, Zac Brown Band to name a few.

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