

# Paranormal Activity (2009)

Rated R. Our ratings: V-2; L-8 ; S/N-2 Running time: 1 hour 26 min.

*Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring.  
What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for  
a little while and then vanishes.  
James 4:14*

By now everyone knows the Katie and Micah face amazing success story of writer-mysterious night-time director Oren Peli's film, which intrusions. has returned hundreds of times the initial cost of \$15,000. The 2009 Paramount Pictures comparisons with the other small-budgeted success, The Blair Witch Project are inevitable. However, for myself, this is a far superior film. Many of the scenes are shot in dim light, but this is far more acceptable than all of the long stretches of black screen in the earlier film.

Katie Featherston (using her real name) and Micah (Micah Sloat) are young adults living together, Katie a graduate student of English, and Micah a day trader. Having lived together for three years, they have now moved into a house in San Diego. Only now does Katie reveal that she has a past of being haunted by what seems to be an angry spirit bent on vengeance. It is not the house, she asserts, because the spirit had tormented her before.

Micah, apparently a take-charge guy, insists on videotaping themselves in the hope of capturing some evidence of her

tormentor. Katie goes along, but soon objects to its intrusiveness. They do discover that objects, such as doors, move while they are asleep. They call in a “psychic expert” (Mark Fredrichs), but he is so overwhelmed by a sense of the presence of evil that he backs off, telling them to call in another expert. Unfortunately that person is not available, and so...

This is a chiller made on the tried and true principle that Alfred Hitchcock exploited so ably, that in the realm of horror, “less is more.” With no music or buckets of blood and gore Mr. Peli has created a little film that is superior in so many ways to all of the Saw and Halloween gore fests. Christian viewers, however, will take exception to the filmmakers’ pessimistic view of the universe.

## **For Reflection/Discussion**

May contain spoilers.

1. Why do you think the horror genre is so popular?
2. How is it often scarier when the filmmaker does not show what the menace is?
3. How is Micah all too typical of the stereotypical male? What does he contribute to apparently arousing the anger of the malevolent tormentors)?
4. How did you feel at the end of the film? Compare this to the classic horror film: this is not a reassuring film in regard to the universe, is it?
5. Neither character seems to possess any religious faith: how might this have helped them cope? Note the words of another person who believed in demons and ghosts, and yet who wrote: “And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to

triumph through us: The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble  
not for him; His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word shall fell him." Martin Luther