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MOVIE REVIEW

Paranormal Activity (2009)

Reviewed by [Owen Gleiberman](#) | Oct 23, 2009

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EW's GRADE

A-

DETAILS

Limited Release: Sep 25, 2009;
 Rated: **R**; Length: 86 Minutes;
 Genre: **Horror**; With: [Katie Featherston](#)
 and [Micah Sloat](#)



BAD DREAMS Katie Featherston suffers sleepless nights in *Paranormal Activity*

Exactly 10 years ago, *The Blair Witch Project* divided audiences every bit as much as it unsettled them. So when I say that Oren Peli's **Paranormal Activity**, a haunted-house thriller shot for \$11,000, was made very much in the peekaboo-vérité spirit of *Blair Witch* — and that, in fact, it may be an even scarier film — you could find that frightening in one of two ways. You might say, "Cool, I've got to see that," or you may think, "No, I won't get fooled again!" What I can tell the *Blair Witch* skeptics is that in that movie, you never really *did* get to see very much, but in *Paranormal Activity* you do, you honestly do — though in a slow-build way that's freaky and terrifying.

The entire film takes place in the two-story San Diego home of sweet but spiky Katie (Katie Featherston), who claims to be plagued by demons, and Micah (Micah Sloat), her obnoxious boyfriend, who totes around a video camera to record evidence that those spirits are real. The two joke and bicker, but at night we see them asleep, the camera at a fixed angle in their dankly lit bedroom. The shot keeps skipping ahead, hour by time-coded hour, until stuff starts to...spook. With its this-is-really-happening vibe, *Paranormal Activity* scrapes away 30 years of encrusted nightmare clichés. The fear is real, all right, because the fear is really in *you*. **A-**

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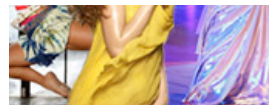
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