

## Regionrat Review.

There is a saying in the artistic world that is as old as Jesus Christ Himself and it's the following: "The book is always better than movie." And it makes all the sense in the world. How couldn't it be? I mean, the book always has far more time to breathe and to grow, developing the characters and the story in a superior manner—the movie (most of the time) doesn't have the timeframe to have the same impact and that's all a matter of format, regardless of the quality of the filming crew and the actors.

But every once in a while comes a movie adaptation that does well and you end up having a warm feeling from within. A feeling that things were done right and you truly appreciate that if the book is a special darling of yours—that was the feeling that I had watching Javier Reyna's independent movie, *Regionrat*.

*Regionrat* is not only Reyna's debut film as a director (and man, what a debut!) and an independent film at that, considering how these low budget films don't have a lot of monetary resources, but it's also based on Richard Laskowski's fantastic novel of the same name. So when heard this film was going to come out in early 2018, I was both excited for the prospect of seeing Ray on the big screen and I was also dreading they were going to mess things up. But it wasn't thankfully not a rude awakening.

Reyna's adaptation maintains the same plot basis: our main character, a teenager named Ray who is a bit of a pothead, has been struggling in a modern Seattle city and has to return to his old hometown, a depressed place called Region, where he ends up meeting his old friends once again and all the bad habits that made him leave the town in the first place.

One of the advantages of adapting *Regionrat* is the fact that the plot is extremely straightforward, so there aren't lots of twists and turns to change, adapt or whatnot—it's almost like you have a straight line and you just have to follow suit. But

still, kudos to Reyna: a movie adaptation for a debut film and a good one at that is not too shabby for a young director; he took all the main elements of the book and gave the movie that slightly somber and street-wise feel that was necessary to make a competent and decent adaptation.

But obviously, most of us don't pay much attention to the filming but to the actors. How did they fare here? Well, the cast is quite decent, it has to be said, but it's Connor Williams as Ray who steals everyone's thunder and gets all the plaudits for his excellent performance. Playing a teenager is always a difficult task for all the emotional issues that it has; now imaging playing a teenager with issues from his past, drug issues and behavior issues.

Playing Ray can be a pretty demanding task and if his character doesn't work, then the entire film can turn into a monumental flop—it's his story and he should have the spotlight in that regard. Thankfully, Connor does a fantastic job and he is the film's major positive, so there's that. A good film with a great performance from the main man is always going to have a major impact on the viewer and that is the case with *Regionrat*.

Overall, this is a pretty good film. Is it better than the book? Of course, but it shouldn't be, either. It's a fun and well-done movie that has a lot of heart, a great work from a starting director and Connor Williams carrying the team on his back from time to time as the main character. I would say that's a good enough adaptation.