



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 27, 2011

## Paranormal Activity 3 Breaks Box Office Records

Those familiar with the first *Paranormal Activity* film will recall that it focused on a young couple, with the female, Katie, being haunted by a demonic spirit that ultimately got the better of the two and managed to possess her by the end of the film.

The next two releases have attempted to provide a back story to the first movie, explaining what prompted the demon to target Katie. *PA3* takes viewers back to 1988, when a younger Katie (Chloe Csengery) and her little sister Kristi (Jessica Tyler Brown) are the focus of demonic attacks. The two children, as well as their mother, Julie (Lauren Bittner) and her boyfriend, Dennis (Christopher Nicholas Smith) experience a variety of strange occurrences, such as the toppling of furniture, after the girls play a game in which they summon Bloody Mary in the bathroom mirror.



Demonic activity escalates as Katie and Kristi are dragged about by an unseen being at ridiculously high speeds, and an entire kitchen full of appliances plays a disappearing act before making a sudden reappearance by falling from the ceiling. This is finally enough for the adults to acknowledge the existence of a spirit in their home.

The mother seeks sanctuary for her family in her own mother's home, not realizing that they are now in even more danger, as the girls' grandmother is the head of a satanic cult of witches. Naturally, things degenerate rapidly.

*Paranormal Activity 3* deserves some scant credit for eliciting fear with various scare tactics rather than the graphic violence of today's version of the genre. Also, unlike the majority of modern horror movies, there is not too much overt sexuality, although the initial footage of the demon would not have been captured had it not been for Dennis and Julie's decision to videotape their bedroom play.

Likewise, *PA3*'s budget was minimal, relying on plot elements to hold the interest of moviegoers rather than multimillion-dollar special effects.

Though it is clear that Dennis maintains a great deal of affection for Julie and her girls, it is disturbing that the couple is not married.

Given the film's reliance on an occult worldview, it is appropriate to turn to a leading source of Christian critique, [Movieguide](#), to address the spiritual content in the film:

Though the occult forces are clearly evil, they win out in the end, just like the previous PARANORMAL ACTIVITY movies. Also, the little girls and other characters play around with the



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dangers of the occult. This is more than disturbing and depressing, it's just plain wrong and can lead to evil occult practices in real life. Media-wise families will make sure their families stay away from the PARANORMAL ACTIVITY movies, including this third one. As God firmly warns in Deuteronomy 18:9-11:

“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritualist or who consults the dead.”

Besides the spiritual implications of the film, it suffers from too much reiteration of the horror found in the first two installments. For instance, by the end of the movie, the viewer feels as though the notion of inadvertently capturing paranormal phenomena on camera may well have been exhausted.

Likewise, it seems not to have been a wise decision for this latest film to engage in self-parody.

Despite these drawbacks, *Paranormal Activity 3* set an opening weekend record for a September or October release, its \$52.6 million far surpassing the \$8.7 million of *The Three Musketeers*.

Perhaps the reason for its success is simply that moviegoers are desperately looking for a well-written and aptly performed horror film reminiscent of such quality films as *The Sixth Sense* or *What Lies Beneath*. Even the first *Paranormal Activity* used subtle scare tactics and effectively built up dread in a way that this latest release does not.

Overall, *Paranormal Activity 3* is not a movie that I would recommend for families, and probably not for anyone interested in going to the movie theater — save this one for the DVD player, if you must watch it.

Photo of a screening of PA2: AP Images



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