

Death to 2021 Review

Death to 2021, a Netflix mockumentary, uses a mix of actual footage and satirical commentary from fictional characters to ridicule and explain the unexpected events of the past year. A sequel to Netflix's *Death to 2020*, directed by the creators of *Black Mirror*, *Death to 2021* uses a similar format to highlight significant news stories from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Capitol riot and the Olympics, among other important events.

The structure of each segment follows a sequence of news reports followed by humorous and opinionated explanations. Several well-known and established actors contribute their own "take" on the news— Joe Keery, Stockard Channing, Hugh Grant and many other performers provide commentary as fictional and laughably melodramatic characters.

Although a sequel, *2021* breaks some new ground. There were many returning cast members from the earlier mockumentary, including Hugh Grant, who plays an arrogant historian named Tennyson Foss, Cristin Millioti as a stereotypical "Karen," Joe Keery, as a struggling millennial influencer named Duke Goolies, and Diane Morgan playing "average" citizen Gemma Nerrick. Along with these, notable new cast members include Lucy Liu, who plays Washington correspondent Snook Austin, and William Jackson Harper playing Zero Fournine, the chief of a social media company and tech entrepreneur.

Although comedy usually predominates in this, satire goes beyond farce and witty jokes and often makes the viewer contemplate the serious issues underlying some of the more troubling events in what many have called one of the worst years in history. One may find themselves laughing at some parts, but at the end of the movie, a viewer may feel more dread regarding current events than humor.

Despite all that, the movie was very enjoyable. Only an hour-long, the movie manages to capture most of the biggest moments of 2021, including the insight of many characters in different circumstances. Although many issues that were faced were less than fortunate, the movie also touched on positive events that happened throughout the year, including the famous show *Squid Game*.

Despite that, many movie critics and viewers would disagree. *Death to 2021* was criticized for being a generic reiteration of its prequel; movie critic Ashley Manning wrote that "Death to 2021 is enjoyable while it's on, while not doing anything special." The humor was also criticized for being overly left-leaning, with many jokes ridiculing anti-vaxxers and Trump supporters. Yet other critics still contended, like Srijoni Rudra, saying, "Death to 2021 is an entertaining watch with laughable moments."

Overall, viewers enjoyed the satire in *Death to 2021*, but felt the film was at a lower standard than its predecessor, *Death to 2020*. I personally thought that despite its left-leaning perspective, *Death to 2021* was enjoyable, and causes viewers to

contemplate the issues of our world. If you have time and an hour on your hands, go check it out.