



'Escape Room' Packs \$18M Stateside

By Anthony D'Alessandro on Jan. 6, 2019



Columbia Picture's *Escape Room* was a great surprise to many, pushing its way past Disney's *Mary Poppins Returns* for 2nd place bragging rights of **\$18M** this morning. At \$6.6M, Saturday held in at -13% from Friday for *Escape Room*. Sony originally was going to construct *Escape Room* during the sleepy post Thanksgiving period of Nov. 30, but then moved the genre pic to Feb. 1 and finally this weekend. Good move: It's quite conceivable that *Glass* will still be going strong at that time.

Rivals agree: *Escape Room* is a great result for a PG-13 horror pic that reportedly carries a \$9M production cost. Horror easily plays to the under 25 set during the first weekend of the year. A great example of how powerful genre can be at this time of year was Paramount's *The Devil Inside* back in 2012: The pic opened to No. 1 with \$33.7M off a rare F CinemaScore. Those who entered *Escape Room* were 54/46 Male and 80% under 35 with the single largest quad being 18-24 years old at 33%. The mix was 42% Caucasian, 22% Hispanic, 20% African American & 16% Asian/Other. *Escape Room* played best in the on the East Coast along with the Mid & South-West.

Social Media metrics group RelishMix wasn't impressed with the online reach for *Escape Room*: Few in the pic's cast have social media pull, the pic has a moderate social media universe near 58M from Facebook, YouTube views, Instagram and Twitter, the video viral rate is low at 9:1 (short of the 13:1 average for a horror film).

Still, something worked here, and RelishMix pegs it to the marketing materials. If you were resting on the couch over the holidays Sony bought a lot of media capitalizing on binge viewing including a Christmas Day NBA Presence, a holiday-themed "Sick of Your Family?" creative, plus there was a "Escape the Ads" custom radio stunt. This in addition to screening the pic extensively, a BuzzFeed promotion along with social media takeovers, and an exclusive themed room and partnership with Escape Hotel Hollywood as well as partnerships with physical escape rooms around the country.

Reports RelishMix, "A lot of horror fans are looking at the trailers and social materials for the film and sharing their own experiences with escape rooms. Some of these fans are really excited to see the movie based on their love of the experience and how the movie resonates with them. And, more casual horror fans like the cast and *Saw*-like elements they're seeing."

CinemaScore is a B for *Escape Room* which is better than Screen Gems' R-rated *The Possession of Hannah Grace* which opened during the sluggish first weekend of December. 'A' CinemaScores are rare for horror pics, so a B is wonderful.