

CREED II (2018)

- Released on November 20th, 2018
- 2 Hours 8 minutes
- \$50 million USD (estimated) Budget
- Directed by Steven Caple Jr.
- Written by Cheo Hodari Coker (story by), Ryan Coogler (characters)
- Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, New Line Cinema, Warner Bros.
- Rated PG-13 for sports action violence, language, and a scene of sensuality

QUICK THOUGHTS

- Marisa Serafini
- Phil Svitek

DEVELOPMENT

- On January 5, 2016, Sylvester Stallone and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures CEO Gary Barber confirmed to *Variety* that a sequel to *Creed* was in development
- The same month, Stallone posed the possibility of seeing Milo Ventimiglia appear in the sequel, reprising his role as Rocky's son Robert Balboa from *Rocky Balboa*
- Ventimiglia previously revealed during the development of *Creed* that he was open to returning to the franchise, stating, "I'll tell you what, if they invited me, I'd love to be there. If they didn't, I wouldn't be offended."
- It was revealed in April 2018 that Ventimiglia would have an appearance in the film. On January 11, 2016, Barber revealed that Ryan Coogler would not be returning due to scheduling conflicts, because he was attached to *Black Panther*, though he would return as executive producer
- Michael B. Jordan's schedule ended up being delayed due to *Black Panther*, as he was starring in that film
- In July 2017, Stallone confirmed that he had completed the script for the sequel, and also revealed that Ivan Drago would be featured in the film
- In October 2017, it was announced that Stallone would direct and produce the film
- However, in December 2017, it was reported that Steven Caple Jr. would instead direct the film with Tessa Thompson confirmed to reprise her role of Bianca, Creed's love interest
- In January 2018, Romanian amateur boxer Florian Munteanu was cast in the film to play Drago's son with Dolph Lundgren set to reprise his role of Drago
- In March 2018, Russell Hornsby joined the cast while Phylicia Rashad, Wood Harris, and Andre Ward were confirmed to reprise their roles from the prior film

WRITING (Cheo Hodari Coker (story by), Ryan Coogler (characters))

- "Everything started to click when Sly came up with the Drago storyline," says Jordan, who is also an executive producer of *Creed II*. "It was natural that Adonis would be a boxer like Apollo, and that Viktor would box the same as his father. In the boxing world, fighters' sons often grow up in the gym watching their fathers, often following them into the sport. It was a genius idea." Not to mention an idea that pulls together various threads and characters across the rich tapestry of the Rocky and Creed franchises.
- *Creed II* is co-written by Stallone himself, thus making this feel like even more of a movie about Rocky as it is about the younger Creed.

STORY/TOPICS

- Heavyweight Championship Title
- Viktor Drago vs Adonis Creed
- Ivan Drago vs Rocky Balboa
- Family

CAST

MICHAEL B. JORDAN (Adonis Johnson)

- "It was a brilliant idea to have the character of Adonis Creed, played beautifully by Michael B. Jordan," says Irwin Winkler, who has produced all the Rocky and Creed films. "It was natural then that the next step would be taking that character into the future, and delve further into his relationships with Rocky, his love Bianca, his adoptive mother Mary Anne, and show how he's handling life in the celebrity spotlight as a rising boxing star."
- "I think Adonis has felt like an underdog ever since he became champion," says Jordan of his character. "I don't think he ever felt like a champ. He never felt like he was the sure-win, which is an interesting thing to play. He's always felt like he has something to prove. He wonders: why do I feel empty? Why do I not feel complete?"
- Jordan spent months training and learning fight choreography with Munteanu.
- Michael and I are almost exactly the same age, and we're also pretty much on the same side when it comes to the values we appreciate," says Munteanu. "He's a family guy who appreciates loyal people and honest people around him. We immediately clicked, and after a few weeks we became good friends. It was a great thing for me because besides the fact that I was the new guy on set, I also had no family or friends with me while filming. Michael said if there's anything I needed, I can come to him, and I really valued that."
- TRAINING:
 - "For the first one, there's no way I could imagine what I was going to be doing - the second time around it was worse, I think," says Jordan, laughing.
 - "I have to believe when I was stepping into the ring, I am a fighter. I got to feel it," says Jordan. "I would work out to exhaustion day in and day out. Sometimes twice a day, going home with swollen knuckles and all.
 - An important part of that for Jordan was working with professional boxing coach Patrice "Boogie" Harris, who says he "earned the nickname 'Pad Man' because I work the pads pretty good."
 - Boxers do rounds with the mitts, rounds with the pads, rounds sparring, jumping rope - again and again. Jordan wanted Harris to put him through the paces, throwing fast combinations at him that he could counter to work on his coordination and timing.
 - "I'm probably the heaviest I've ever been," says Jordan. "Heavier than I was in the first Creed, or in Black Panther. It's all conditioning: A boxer has a certain look and have to make a certain weight. To get in shape for this one, we definitely amped up the cardio along with the boxing, which itself is an amazing workout, two times a day, every day for six weeks."
 - At the off-screen weigh-in, Munteanu recalls [Jordan & him] both knew they had some work to do to tip the scale toward the low end of the heavyweight division. "I think Mike weighed in about one hundred and ninety pounds and you have to at least weigh in two hundred pounds to be a heavy weight. He weighed about

fifty pounds less than me then," says Munteanu. To overcome the size difference meant meeting in the middle, with Munteanu dropping weight and Jordan bulking up.

SYLVESTER STALLONE (Rocky Balboa)

- Stallone wound up in the ICU while making Rocky IV after directing Lundgren to do real sparring with him, so he could film some authentic shots. Lundgren, then fresh off a succession of Australian, Swedish, and two-time European heavyweight karate championships, landed an uppercut to Stallone's rib cage with such force it slammed Stallone's heart against his breastbone, compressing it and causing it to enlarge.
- In the first Creed movie we didn't really get to see much of the backstory, so it's a shake up to see it in Creed II. Director Steven Caple Jr. says this was something Stallone asked for early on. "He didn't want to die," Caple told Business Insider of how Stallone saw the Rocky character by the end of the sequel. "And we felt he needed his family, so Rocky had to leave Philly."
- "That line Rocky says, 'It's your time now,' that wasn't even in the script," Caple said. "I didn't know what he was going to say."

TESSA THOMPSON (Bianca)

- Thompson says, she's become more interested in learning American Sign Language (ASL). In the first film Thompson worked with Zinzi Evan - Coogler's then-fiance, now wife - who studied communicative disorders and is an American Sign Language interpreter.
- Thompson says she learned a lot about this from listening and watching a real-life boxing spouse, Tiffany Ward, the wife of professional boxer Andre Ward. Tiffany gave Thompson and the filmmakers valuable insight into the partnership between boxers and their wives.

PHYLICIA RASHAD (Mary Anne Creed)

- "It was so exciting to have Phylicia back with us. She's someone that even before my career, I looked up to as a woman and as an actor. We sat ringside together over several days and just get to talk and really get to know each other. I think the warmth we personally feel for each other is communicated on screen - another example of life-imitating-art on this film." -Thompson

DOLPH LUNDGREN (Ivan Drago)

- Lundgren received a text from Stallone. "It was a short text and it says: 'would you consider playing Ivan Drago again? I have this idea: the sins of the fathers,'" recalls Lundgren. "And I thought, 'Wow, that's interesting!'"
- Lundgren says his enthusiasm only grew after he met Steven Caple Jr. and began working with the director to give dimension and humanity to Ivan Drago.
- "Now [Ivan's] deteriorated to the point where he's working the door of some club in the Ukraine. He sees his son as the vehicle for the family to return to glory."
- Caple was excited to reveal new aspects of an old villain. "It was great to bring him back in a way that felt new and real," says Caple. "Dolph really allowed me to play with that, and opened himself up to portray the character, reaching into the depths in a way he couldn't in Rocky IV because the character served a different purpose then."

- "I wasn't very close to my father, who grew up during the Depression and had a very tough childhood," says Lundgren. "Obviously, when I was a kid, I didn't think about how that may have affected him and maybe that's why he was how he was. Instead, I felt very mistreated at times. My dad was an army officer and who was physically hard on me. So, it's pretty close to Viktor and Ivan. There was a lot I could tap into."
- Lundgren has several scenes in which Ivan speaks Russian, which he found difficult to do, despite speaking several languages. "I had to do about forty lines in Russian in this movie. I guess somebody thought because I'm from Sweden, I can also speak Russian," he laughs. "But I don't. We had a Russian coach. Steven wanted it to be authentic, but it was hard."

FLOREN MUNTEANU (Viktor Drago)

- UFC fighter Sage Northcutt heavily campaigned through social media to get the role of Ivan Drago's son.
- "His mother, Ludmilla, is not there anymore. His father has his own problems from decades earlier. Viktor doesn't feel that he's loved or really appreciated as a son, and that is the biggest struggle inside of him."
- They needed someone who physically resembled the tall, imposing character and could also act and box. They also needed someone who could play an antagonist who was both a fearsome force of nature in the ring, and a wounded son searching for validation.
- After months of reviewing hundreds of photos, videos, and audition tapes, Stallone found the 235-pound, 6-foot-4 boxer from Germany named Florian "Big Nasty" Munteanu.
- Munteanu, an amateur heavyweight with a 68-10 (with six draws) record, was told by his fight manager that the producers of Creed II had seen his photos and videos and wanted to know if he was interested in auditioning. Soon thereafter, the twenty-seven-year-old Romanian-German boxer in- who grew up watching the Rocky films with his father, an avid boxer - was told "Sylvester Stallone wants to Skype with you."
- "I had my last audition in Los Angeles just before Christmas, and then I went home to Munich," says Munteanu. "I got call from my manager the night of December 23, but my parents were already sleeping. So, the next day, I had a nice Christmas dinner present for my parents - that I had gotten the part. You couldn't write a script like that."
-Munteanu
- "He's the same age I was when I played Ivan. I'm from Europe; he's from Europe. We both started at age ten working out and fighting. I was involved in karate and he was involved in K-1 kickboxing and boxing. I think Michael and Stallone are about the same size, and Florian is my height, so the physical contrast is similar." -Lundgren
- Lundgren says he and Munteanu spent a lot of time together in Los Angeles after the latter was cast, and the time they spent made it easy once cameras rolled. "It really felt like we had a father-son relationship, because he let me into his world," says Lundgren. "We worked out, went out to dinner together, and talked for hours about the characters and the movie. Onscreen, you can see a deep connection between us."
- "I needed to be massive, but also super-shredded, dropping weight," says Munteanu. "I'm Drago's son, so I had to be intimidating size-wise, taller and outweighing Adonis. I totally fulfilled those goals. I've never been in such a good shape."
- "Florian picked it up really fast and was a great listener, a hard worker," says Hernandez. "No ego, no attitude about being a boxer. Florian's very open, willing to take information and do it right."

RUSSELL HORNSBY (Buddy Marcelle)

- A boxing promoter who sets up the match between Adonis Creed and Viktor Drago
- Russell Hornsby was born on May 15, 1974 in San Francisco, California, USA. He is an actor, known for *Fences* (2016), *After the Sunset* (2004) and *Meet the Parents* (2000). He has been married to Denise Walker since August 1, 2008

MILO VENTIMIGLIA (Robert Balboa)

- Milo Ventimiglia reprises his role as Robert Balboa Jr., 12 years after Rocky Balboa
- Rocky's son, who moved to Vancouver in the period between *Rocky Balboa* and *Creed*
- He was born in Anaheim, California, to Carol (Wilson) and Peter Ventimiglia. His father is of Italian/Sicilian descent, and his mother has English and Scottish ancestry. First coming of notice playing the reckless and too smart for his own good 'Jess' on WB's "Gilmore Girls", Ventimiglia moved on to NBC's "American Dreams", WB's "Bedford Diaries" (working with Tom Fontana) and finally landing back on NBC with their international phenomenon, "Heroes". Ventimiglia then appeared in TNT's "Mob City". Helmed by Frank Darabont and taking place in 1947 Los Angeles, Ventimiglia plays Ned Stax a fixer for Bugsy Seigels crime syndicate.
- Ventimiglia's film work includes both studio and independent movies, comedy and drama. Known for darker films "Pathology" (helmed by Nevelandine/Taylor) and "The Divide" (directed by Xavier Gen), Ventimiglia also spent time on two comedies with Adam Sandler. "That's My Boy" and "Grown Ups 2". Other releases include: "Killing Season" along side Robert Deniro and John Travolta, and the Weinstein companies "Grace of Monaco" starring Nicole Kidman, who plays princess Grace Kelly. Ventimiglia plays Kelly's press agent Rupert Allan.

DIRECTING (Steven Caple Jr.)

- Sylvester Stallone backed out of directing the film
- Steven Caple Jr. is a director and producer, known for *The Land* (2016), *A Different Tree*(2014) and *Prentice-N-Fury's Ice Cream Adventure* (2012)
- Coogler suggested to MGM that Caple take his place.
- "No detail is too small for him," says Thompson, who stars as Bianca, of Caple. "He really is happy to get in there and talk about everything from hair to wardrobe, set design. He really advised me to be a part of those areas, really in a collaborative way. It will start with us always. What do we want? What do we see? Then how to communicate that to the rest of the artists that are involved in satisfying that vision. So it was really just great." - Thompson
- "[Stallone] had a serious conversation with Mike and [they] both agreed upon the structure of the script, and it felt good. Then [Stallone] wanted to do *Rambo*... and he wouldn't be able to do *Creed* [II] and do *Rambo* as a director. On top of that, he's like, "I know I'm missing the voice of Adonis and Tessa and [Wood] Harris and some other characters." It was a great conversation.
- "I was a fan since I was a kid. *Rocky* is one of my favorite films in general, but it's my favorite one out of this series. I remember as a kid it motivating me. Then as I got older, it was very much an artistic way of looking at a film. I was able to appreciate it for its filmmaking execution, done by Sly and the whole crew. This whole story behind getting it made. You appreciate it on another level."

PRODUCTION (Kramer Morgenthau)

- Production started at the beginning of April 2018 and ended in the middle of June.
- Spent most of the last six months, beginning in January 2018, working outside in frigid temps under overcast skies, or inside gyms, hospitals, apartments and the soundstages at SunCenter Studios in Aston, Pennsylvania.
- The visual design for the family scenes, especially with Adonis, Bianca and their newborn baby, had a different color palette and tone. "It was very important to Steven to capture the intimacy between them, to show their private moments and to make the camera feel like it's just a fly on the wall," says Morgenthau. "We kept the color palette warmer and the camera still like you're just in the room observing these special moments, especially with their baby."
- TRAINING SEQUENCES:
 - Championship match in Moscow Olympic Stadium between Adonis and Viktor, and a rough-hewn training camp in Death Valley, California, where Rocky brings Adonis.
 - Purgatoria El Box, a bare-bones training facility for fighters to rediscover themselves in the harsh natural desert hell of Death Valley, California. After the production completed ten weeks of shooting in Philadelphia, Caple, Jordan, Stallone, and the film's crew travelled to Deming, New Mexico (standing in for Death Valley) to complete the film with scenes to be shot in the desert.
 - "I think it's almost every DP's dream to do a boxing movie because boxing is a very visual sport." The image of Adonis shadowboxing in the moonlight, awash in the glow of the flames from the fire burning behind him, is just one example of what Morgenthau describes. "Sometimes, you have to go through the fire before you can see what's important," says Jordan. "Adonis needs to do that. The guy who wants it more than the other guy is the one who wins."
- FIGHTING SEQUENCES:
 - Learning choreography and fighting for the camera is counterintuitive for most real-life boxers, who are trained to land punches - not pull them. Fighting for the camera differs from real-life boxing by stretching the arms out, and making punches wider and longer - which is opposite of the tight, slow-moving, tucked-in stance real fighters have against opponents in the ring.
 - Working together with Hernandez and his team - including Daniel Bernhardt and Don Theerathada - Jordan and Munteanu went step-by-step, blow-by-blow through what Jordan calls "a violent ballet - partners in a violent dance we rehearsed every day. It's a very intense training process, which paid off."
 - The veteran stunt coordinator Danny Hernandez, says working with Caple was amazing as they broke down sixteen rounds of fighting. Caple wanted to make each fight into its own story within the larger story with the cascade of punches and events taking the audience up and down with the action.
 - "We used a TechnoCrane, gimbles, dollies. We used drones and special cameras looking down on the ring. We utilized a lot of hand-held, including hand-held spider mode - you name it, we used it. We really went for it. We did not leave any stone unturned when we shot the film."
 - Morgenthau's go-to cameras for the shoot were the Arriflex Arri Alexa with Panavision lenses, but he also brought in the high-speed Phantom camera to shoot key beats at 1,000 frames per second. They also shot a lot of the sequences at 120 frames per second. The film's boxing sequences were planned

carefully to give each piece a distinctive look yet blend within the larger color palettes used in different locations and parts of the film.

- Lighting designer John Duncan Jr., a Philadelphia local, who designed the lighting used around the ring and on the floor of boxing arenas during the matches. "We did our own thing with it where the rays of light come in and then close in with these beams of light coming straight down from the rafters like columns," says Caple. "It looks like a cage and I was surprised how effective it was and how dramatic it was, and how much it really sets up that moment on so many levels."

EDITING/VFX (Dana E. Glauberman, Saira Haider, Paul Harb)

- Three editors teamed up to bring a cohesive editorial vision to *Creed II*. "We had only two assistants – Debbie Tennant was our first, and Carolyn Calvert was our second – and only one PA – Jarret Berkowitz – for editorial. So we were a very small crew, considering 3 editors, and the amount of time that we had to complete the movie." -Glauberman
- "I was looking for something different than anything I had ever worked on before. So when my agent, Jasan Pagni at WME, suggested CREED 2 to me, I went back to watch the first CREED, then read the script for this one. Steven and I clicked during a FaceTime interview, and so I was on board from that point on." - Glauberman
- "I've been working with Sylvester Stallone, and the producers of the Rocky/Creed movies going back to Balboa so I was suggested to Steven. I really liked the script and when I met with Steven and heard his vision for this sequel I knew I wanted to be a part of it." - Harb
- "Paul was brought on specifically to cut the fights, while Saira and I focused on everything else. But with our tight schedule, and the amount of footage we had, we all contributed to discussions about each others' work. Collaborating with each other was key." - Glauberman
- "There ended up being over 100 hours of coverage on the fights alone and due to our extremely tight schedule and in particular our tight VFX schedule, the majority of which was the fight shots, Saira ended up taking on all the training montage duties. In Philly, during principal photography, I was buried in fight footage while Dana and Saira split up dialog scenes as we all just tried to keep up with camera. From day one we wanted each other's feedback on whatever we might be working on so, as both Dana and Saira said, the workflow just happened naturally. Once Steven started his director cut in LA he wanted everyone's input on every aspect of the film throughout the process so it really was a very collaborative process. Lots of story debates. Lots of cuts being passed around." -Harb
- "The runtime on the first assembly was something like three hours and twenty minutes." -Harb
- "We were completely done by October 23. Basically, we had a 19-week post schedule (as opposed to a "normal" 26-week post schedule), close to 1000 VFX, and a lot of story to tell. So from start to finish, we had a total of about six and a half months to complete." -Glauberman
- "For the fights, everything in the schedule was stacked in a way that I was turning shots over for things I was still working on. The VFX Dept and vendors had to chase me on things that were constantly changing so it was kinda nuts. It went like this until picture lock. VFX hated me. I felt bad." -Harb

- “After our last preview while we were on the final dub stage, we ended up putting a scene back in at the last minute — having to trust Steven’s instincts as well as ours, being that we were not able to preview again.” -Glauberman
- “There’s a specific scene between Ivan Drago and his son Viktor that never felt right where it was, but then it ended up being this really cool montage earlier in the film just by intercutting it with something else. The whole movie is filled with moments that we made work by that kind of thinking.”- Haider
- When Adonis is looking at "archival footage" of Apollo Creed's death on his tablet, it's actually unused takes/angles from Rocky IV. This footage initially showed up in one of the TV spots for the film, showing on a TV screen at the restaurant that Adonis and Bianca visit after his championship fight.
- TEST SCREENINGS:
 - “It’s crucial. It helps tremendously. We’ve been living in a room for months, often by ourselves or with just a few other people who we’re working with, that sometimes all you need is to be in a theater full of people who don’t know anything about the movie and have natural, honest responses. Feeling the vibe of the room and hearing those first-time reactions reveals a lot to us as the filmmakers.”
 - HARB: You gotta feel that room. Getting the cards afterward is helpful — there are patterns you may see that are definitely valuable but nothing can replace what you gain by reading an audience.
 - “There are things in those screenings where you realize — we had a perfect moment in there and we cut it out — now we have to put it back because we missed it for the momentum of the movie. It’s an important story point. It’s the feel of the room but it’s also about confirming decisions that we have made in the cutting room.”

TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS

- Rocky, who is now training Apollo Creed's son, is two years older than Mickey was when he trained Rocky in the original movie.

SOUND/MUSIC (Ludwig Göransson)

- Vince DiCola, composer of Rocky IV was originally slated to return to score the film, however he debunked this in a Facebook post stating “I would have loved to return, however that’s just how Hollywood works. We don’t always get what we want.”
- Tessa Thompson was once again involved with the songwriting process, reuniting with composer and producer Ludwig Goransson, who in turn brought in top writers and artists like Bibi Bourelly and James Fauntleroy to develop Bianca's evolving sound.
 - "We really wanted Bianca's style and voice to expand and reach a wider audience," says Thompson.
 - “The music she's making now is also a reflection of herself. Music is also a love of mine, and the music we wrote really felt like the kind of music that, if I were a musician, I would make. It was nice because I got to hide behind Bianca to explore it.”
- Göransson needed to work within the constraints and themes on both the original “Creed,” which he also composed, and the iconic “Rocky” theme music, while giving the audience something new and epic.

- “I’m always trying to experiment and come up with new palettes of sound and new combinations of music that you haven’t really seen or heard in film before,” Göransson told *TheWrap*. “I’m just constantly figuring out new ways to reinvent myself. And if it’s combining ’70s jazz with Puccini and 808 drums, I’ll try that.”
- Göransson put together a grandiose composition that marries modern hip-hop production with a traditional string orchestra and even a hint of ’70s jazz instrumentation as a nod to the original film.
- Göransson has composed the score on each of Coogler’s films, including Coogler’s early shorts at USC and this year’s “Black Panther.”
- “For *Creed*, I spent two days in a boxing gym recording a boxer jumping the ropes and hitting the bags and made [those sounds] into beats and rhythms that I could use in my music.” -Göransson
- “Everyone knows that theme that Bill Conti created, and it all stems from the ’70s composition and his production. So I studied those scores and his music and put my own spin on that with modern production and the way that I write for orchestra. I love combining different genres and mixing them up to see where we come out.” -Göransson
- “So the challenge today is: how do you score a six-minute montage and keep the attention of the audience the whole time? We wrote a six-minute piece of music that goes through so many different emotions and so many dynamic levels and it has Jacob Banks as kind of like a gospel singer on there, and then it goes into an A\$AP Rocky verse over the *Creed* theme. It’s definitely different than how you did it 30 years ago.” --Göransson

PROMOTION

- *Creed II* was released in the United States on November 21, 2018
- It premiered on November 14, 2018 at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City
- From now until 2019, Caple will be promoting the movie all over the world: South Africa, Italy, Spain, England, Brazil.

BOX OFFICE

- In the United States and Canada, *Creed II* was released alongside *Ralph Breaks the Internet* and *Robin Hood*, as well as the wide expansion of *Green Book*, and was projected to gross \$44–54 million from 3,350 theaters in its five-day opening weekend
- The film made \$11.6 million on its first day, including \$3.7 million from Tuesday night previews (the second best pre-Thanksgiving total ever behind fellow release *Ralph Breaks the Internet*'s \$3.8 million and marking a 64% improvement over the first film's \$1.4 million preview total)
- It went on to debut to \$35.3 million in its opening weekend (a five-day total of \$55.8 million), finishing second at the box office and marking the best Thanksgiving opening for a live-action film, besting *Enchanted* (\$49.1 million) and *Four Christmases* (\$46.1 million)

RECEPTION

- RT: 81% Tatometer: 89%
- The website's critical consensus reads, "*Creed II*'s adherence to franchise formula adds up to a sequel with few true surprises, but its time-tested generational themes still pack a solid punch."
- IMDB: 8.0/10

- Cinemascore: A
- “Michael B. Jordan and Sylvester Stallone again provide a potent one-two combo, in a movie filled with nostalgic callbacks that make the most of the franchise's durable formula.”
- Odie Henderson of *RogerEbert.com* gave the film three out of four stars, stating that “*Creed II* falls victim to the sins of sequelitis—it's bigger, louder and more grandiose than its predecessor—yet manages to right itself by not losing focus on the humanity of its central characters.”
- Owen Gleiberman of *Variety* called the film “rousing and effective” and wrote “*Creed II* has been made with heart and skill, and Jordan invests each moment with such fierce conviction that he makes it all seem like it matters. Even if it all mattered a notable notch more in *Creed*.”
- Eric Kohn of *IndieWire* gave the film a “B”, praising Stallone's performance and saying: “Kramer Morgenthau's cinematography lacks the showy steadicam acrobatics of *Creed*, but the climactic battle between Adonis and Viktor still delivers a dazzling light show that dovetails right into the visceral mayhem of the battle, captured from so many angles some viewers may reel from the punches themselves.”

SEQUEL/LEGACY