

### CARS 3 (2017)

- Released by June 16th, 2017
- 1 hour 49 minutes
- \$175 million (estimated) budget
- Brian Fee directed
- Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures
- Rated G

### QUICK THOUGHTS:

- Demetri Panos
- Marisa Serafini
- Becca Brown

### DEVELOPMENT (Cars\_01\_Director\_Brian\_Fee)

- We did a lot of research,” says director Brian Fee. “We looked at athletes in other sports, but really focused on NASCAR drivers. They start at such an early age and their lives are centered around driving. We even talked to a sports psychologist who explained that many of these drivers can’t imagine doing anything else.” The ideas resonated, and became the motivation for Lightning McQueen’s journey as he faces newer, younger racers. “It’s kind of Timeless story in sports,” says screenwriter Mike Rich, who’s behind movies like “Secretariat” and “The Rookie.”
- Bob Peterson: Director Brian Fee, executive producer Jon Lasseter, Mike Rich, and story supervisor Scott Morse spent a lot of time in the early stages about three or four years ago talking about what would make a worthy sequel.
- Mike Rich “ I got a call from Pixar. I think part of the reason they were expressing an interest in me — and I was thrilled with the prospect of working for them — was that I had worked on several films which had sports as a theme or sports as a backdrop. Also, my very first film, *Finding Forrester*, had a bit of a mentoring aspect to it as well. While they were very early on in the development and the brainstorming of this idea, those were two themes that they were interested in pursuing, so I think that’s why I got the call.” “ I think it represents a universal truth — not just in sports. In this day and age so many of us are wrestling with a changing landscape in our lives and work. Sometimes we feel that if we don’t find a way to adapt, get smarter, or fit in with what’s happening in our careers, that we’re just going to be simply forced out, and probably not on our own terms.”
- “Some of the research we did through NASCAR was how technology is changing in that sport, how technology is changing racing. Drivers spend more time on a simulator than they do real tracks. I was just talking to Ray Evernham [a former racing crew chief and current NASCAR analyst] about this track (the interview took place at Sonoma Raceway in California), and this track is on the NASCAR circuit once. Once in the summer they’ll come here in June, and most of the drivers are not familiar with this track. A lot of turns, a lot of elevations, and I asked Ray, “If they only drive it once a year, how do they get good?” Simulators. They will spend all their time in simulators. That’s how they learn the track.” - Fee
- “We sent the two production designers on a really wintery week, in a convertible Camaro (because they insisted on a convertible) all the way from Daytona up through the Carolinas so it was real-life research rather than just internet research. The team also went to two race tracks that are no longer operable, one of which was legendary at the beginnings of stock car racing and then North Wilkesboro, which was very influential to the film. When they got there, the caretaker said “I’ve mowed the track for you.” -Fee (Cars\_Research)

## **WRITING** (Kiel Murray, Bob Peterson, Mike Rich) (**Producers\_Writers**)

- “I think what will really resonate with audiences—especially adults—is this idea of finding meaning as we age, finding a way to be valuable in every phase of our lives, and giving back to the next genera on in a way we don’t ever think about when we’re just getting started.”
- “We wanted to get back to the McQueen story. When we looked at what would be next for him, we wondered what that would be like both as an athlete, and also for what he was dealing with in the rest of his life.” - Kiel Murray
- “I have a daughter and two sons, and I’ve been keenly observing the boys’ natural confidence and my daughter’s self-doubt. Even though she is very brave and does amazing things, her initial go-to thing is a lack of confidence. She’s twelve now, and I’ve also seen it with her friends. It got me into reading about the recent studies of a natural confidence gap in girls. And I talked to a lot of women at Pixar in leadership positions who said they really identified with that. Even though they are in places of success or power, they still had nagging self-confidence issues. We also talked to Cristela about her own life story and her confidence issues while coming up in comedy.” - Kiel
- About Mike Rich: “We watch a lot of stuff. We watched a lot of mentor movies. We also love sports movies. That’s actually how we got Mike Rich as a writer, because we were looking at sports movies. Writing movies like *Secretariat*, these great underdog sports movies, Mike is fantastic at that. And Mike wrote *Finding Forrester*, which is also a wonderful mentor story. That’s actually how we found – we need this guy. This guy knows the world we’re playing in and he can bring a lot to it. One of the best things we did was hire Mike onto the film. He really started to set up the movie that we’re finally having on the screen.” - Fee

## **STORY/TOPICS**

- Old vs New Cars
- Female Progression
- Character Arcs

## **CAST:**

- “I will stand up and walk around. I don’t do good, just sitting down in a chair. I want to be very close to them while they’re delivering their lines, and I’ll talk with them and read against them, so that they have somewhere to go. It’s fun because, if I’m reading the other part and we’re doing an entire scene, if I get a little louder with what I choose to do, they get louder. If I get a little more gritty with my responses, they get a little more gritty. If I start yelling at them, they start yelling back at me. It’s almost like I have a little special dial that I can just turn by what I do, and I’m just saying the lines in between theirs. It was very physical with everybody. I remember, after every recording session, they were exhausted, and I found that I was, too. But, I think everybody had a really good time. They felt it when they needed to feel it, and had fun when we needed to have fun. And I tried to leave room for them all to improvise. I wanted that out of their performance. We can animate it to look like the characters just came up with it, but I wanted to make sure they said it like they just came up with it. It was really fun. I could go into micro-detail on each actor and it would be totally different.” - Fee

## **OWEN WILSON** (Lightening McQueen) (**Cars\_02\_Owen**)

- “There’s a lot of personal growth that’s gonna happen for this character, and that makes me really excited. Otherwise, why have a movie? You want to feel like the characters are taken to a new place in their lives, and that’s exactly what we went after with this.” - Fee

### **CRISTELA ALONZO** (Cruz Ramirez) (**Cars\_03\_Cristela**)

- “We went to her standup act and we were already in love with her humor and her liveliness and her infectious laugh. She just starts talking and you want to hang out with her. And there’s a part in her comedy act where she stops telling jokes and gets really serious and she talks about her mother. There’s such a soul in her voice when she stops telling jokes and that’s when we knew she’s got to be the right one.” - Fee
- “Early on we did not have Cruz figured out as a character, that’s for sure. Cruz existed. Cruz was a male character when the story took place in central California. Cruz was a farmer, and it was completely different. [Lightning] McQueen was just on a journey through the central valley of California and he happened upon Cruz and was kinda handcuffed with Cruz throughout the journey... Cruz eventually became female.” -Fee (**Cruz\_Concept**)
- “I remember having a very long conversation when we decided to change Cruz. Early on in the process, she was a he, and we changed the gender to female. We had a long conversation with Owen about that, and he just loved that and thought that was wonderful. He started talking about why he thought that was cool.” - Fee
- “Cristela, we recorded a lot with her, because that was a character we weren’t gonna find in scratch. Scratch wasn’t gonna be that helpful. So we did very little scratch and we would just bring her in. So I guess you could say that she did her own scratch. We were always playing with lines, giving her room. We were all – sometimes myself, sometimes Bob, the writer on her scenes – we’d be throwing her ideas. We kinda found it organically.” -Fee

### **LARRY THE CABLE GUY** (Mater) (**Cars\_04\_Larry**)

- “It’s been life-changing. It’s just been awesome. When it first came out is when I first had my first little boy, my first kid. And then it kind of threw me into the family, the kid-movie type stuff. I’ve done two or three kid movies since then, with Fox Home Video. It just kind of changed and brought new blood into what I do. I always wanted to do stuff like that. So I’m glad that *Cars* came along, because it enabled me to do that kind of stuff.” - Larry
- “Mater is closer to me personally than Larry the Cable Guy.”
- “Mater’s a little like Joe Pesci. Joe Pesci’s great, as long as it ain’t all about Joe Pesci, you know what I mean? So I think that they’ve done it the right way.”
- “My first line was, “My name’s Mater, just like Toe-Mater, without the Toe.” That was the first line, and [John Lasseter’s] telling me about it, and I’m thinking to myself, and there was like a couple other words they used that I didn’t think sounded good. And I said, “Can I say...?” He goes, “Say it how you would say it! But basically just let them know you’re Mater.” So I went, my opening line. It was like, “Hey! My name’s Mater. Like Toe-Mater without the Toe!” And John Lasseter went, “That’s it!” And right then I said, “Holy mackerel, that’s awesome. I didn’t even *do* anything.” But right then, I just felt comfortable, and from that minute on, we were steamrolling down the tracks with all kinds of good stuff. So the minute that tow truck started talking, the minute I started talking for the tow truck, that was it. That was all I needed.”

### **NATHAN FILLION** (Sterling) (**Cars\_05\_Nathan**)

- Known for *Castle*, *Firefly* and *Serenity*, voice work as Hal Jordan/Green Lantern in the DC Animated Universe.
- Previously lent his voice to villainous frat bro Johnny Worthington in *Monsters University*.
- “I think of Sterling as a ten-thousand dollar suit. He’s not a giant man that comes into a room and holds court and demands everybody kiss his ring. He’s not that kind of leader. He’s down to earth

and charming and the exactly person you figure should be running this company. He's the kind of guy that makes you think, hey, I could have a beer with this guy. Or a quart of oil." - Fee

- "He was an evolution. As the movie goes on, they'll be like, "Oh! This seems to be working great" or "This isn't working as well, but it works better when we do this, so we're gonna do more of that. We're gonna change these two scenes to be more of this way." You come in, you do three or four of these recordings. And as I did, the end of the movie got a little darker, and a little darker for Sterling." - Fillion

#### **ARMIE HAMMER (Jackson Storm) (Cars\_06\_Armie)**

- "Armie [Hammer] was very athletic, and by that, I mean he jumps around a lot. He jogs in place before he delivers a line, and I meet that level." - Fee
- "I have two kids, but I didn't watch the other two 'Cars' movies because I have kids," "I watched the other 'Cars' movies because I love the 'Cars' franchise." - Hammer
- "The first movie is really special to me. I was, like, 19 years old and living in Spain for work. It was the first time I'd ever traveled abroad by myself, and I was lost out there a little bit. Then I watched the movie 'Cars' — in Spanish, by the way, but with subtitles — and it felt so nostalgic, just everything I loved about road trips, and it reminded me of being home and all the great things a movie is supposed to elicit. I connected with it, and I ended up watching the first 'Cars' movie every night for three or four weeks while I was working on this project over there. So for me, 'Cars' is a special thing, and the fact they even asked me to be a part of it ... I said yes, no matter what the part was." - Hammer
- "My favorite thing to say about Jackson Storm is that he's a real gashole," Hammer grins.

#### **PAUL NEWMAN (Doc)/ TOM MAGLIOZZI (Click & Clack)**

- I asked them to pull everything and print it out for me. I went through to find fun things or things that seemed relevant. We knew that we were going to have that moment in town when McQueen sees the letters that Doc wrote about him, and we had the idea about including a few flashbacks so we could see him moving and talking.
- "It is such a nice layer to have, and gives it so much history and depth. Bob: It seemed natural that Doc would have a place in this film, and listening to the Paul Newman recordings was like hearing an old friend. Jon Lasseter said that Newman would joke around, like he took a plastic water bottle and put it behind his neck when no one was looking, then he would stretch his neck and crinkle the bottle like his bones were creaking. *[Laughs]*
- "He was a jokester, and that came out in some of the dialogue. I added the scene with Doc clowning around with items stacked on his hood just to give that impression. Doc was pretty gruff in the first film, but there would've probably been moments just like there were with Paul Newman when Doc messed around a bit to add levity."
- Tom Magliozzi with Click and Clack. We actually went back to the producer and he helped us go back to the original Car Talk tapes. 'Don't drive like my brother.' actually came from those Click and Clack tapes that we were allowed to use."
- Bob Peterson is the voice of Chick Hicks [replacing Michael Keaton], he was doing the scratch for it, and it was just so darn funny. Everything he did was funny. Half of what he did was making it up. He kinda knew the gist of what I was looking for, so he would just start playing in that area. He was coming up with stuff that was so funny, and that was the stuff that landed in the movie. That was scratch. Of course, we actually hired Bob to be the voice.

## SYMBOLISM/TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS

- A113 - Sterling Office Door
- John Lasseter's office at Walt Disney Animation Studios is also numbered A113.
- Commentator Shannon Spokes has the number A113 on her press sticker.
- Pizza Planet Truck is one of the competitors in the demolition derby that Lightning and Cruz accidentally stumble into. After getting smashed by a car, the iconic rocket on top of the truck flies off into the audience.
- the Buy N Large Logo appears on the track in the racing stadium. BnL also appears during the credits of Cars 3 on a bumper sticker.
- Luxo, Jr. Ball: The famous ball from the Pixar short film Luxo Jr. appears as an illustration on one of the trucks in the demolition derby sequence. The Luxo Jr. car also has the number 86 on it, a reference to the year 1986, which was when Pixar was founded as its own company.
- Reference Apple with the iconic Macintosh boot up sound which is heard when Cruz started up her computer on the beach.
- Coco's small Mexican town setting makes an appearance on the TV in the training center, and the guitar is visible during waitress Sweet Tea's performance.
- Miss Fritter, the school bus from the demolition derby, has a street sign attached to each side. One says Cutting Blvd, which is a reference to the name of Pixar's street in their first office, while the other says Park Ave, a reference to the street where Pixar's current studio is based.
- Jeff Gordon reprises his Cars 2 role as Jeff Gorvette, Darrell Waltrip returns as Darrell Cartrip, Daniel Suarez appears as Daniel Swervez, Ryan Blaney is Ryan "Inside" Laney, Chase Elliott debuts as Chase Racelott, and Bubba Wallace as Bubba Wheelhouse.
- A billboard advertising the Sleep Well Motel can be seen as Mack drives down the highway. The Motel appeared in the Toy Story tv special *Toy Story of Terror!*
- *Piston Cup racers including Lightning McQueen wear Lightyear Buzzard tires, a reference to Buzz Lightyear of Toy Story.*
- One of Lightning McQueen's rivals on the track is a light blue colored #31 car named Terry Kargas, which is sponsored by TripleDent Gum. The gum brand was introduced in Inside Out, with Riley's brain deciding to sing the very catchy TripleDent Gum jingle.

## DIRECTING (Brian Fee)(Cars\_01\_Director\_Brian\_Fee)

- Storyboard artist on the first two Cars films (as well as *WALL-E* and *Ratatouille*).
- Two voice cameos in the first Cars.
- "I've never directed anything. But I did work with John [Lasseter] very closely, and I worked with Andrew Stanton very closely on *WALL-E*. I worked with John on both Cars movies, and I was in development working on this one. I was literally tapped on the shoulder and asked – well, told – John wants to see you. Okay. What, now? Now. Uhhh, okay.' So I walked to John's office, I had no idea, this was just out of the blue as far as I was concerned. I walked into John's office and that's when he said, "You're gonna direct Cars 3." Ed Catmull [president of Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios] was sitting next to him, and Catmull leans over and says, "Now we realize we're not actually asking. We know that." [Laughs] That was quite a moment, because I was completely honored that they would trust me with the story, and super honored to be able to continue to find the story. Because this was early on in the process when it wasn't locked up yet story-wise. But also terrified, because I've never directed anything before. It's kinda hard to do. I've watched other directors very closely and it's a hard job. It's always a hard job. It doesn't matter how many movies you've directed, everyone is super hard. So how much harder would it be to not even know how to do it? I had a lot to learn. So you can excuse yourself, go down the

hall to an empty office and scream for 10 minutes, right? And then come out, roll up your sleeves and get to work.”

- “Now, I didn’t know anything about production. I didn’t know anything about directing animators. I didn’t know anything about lighting. I didn’t know anything about directing the art department. But I actually found those things to be not too hard, because it’s their job to do great work. There are so many great people, they’re experts. It was just my job to make sure they know what the story needs and that everything they’re producing, I hold it against one question: is this helping us tell our story? If this is helping us tell our story, great. If it’s not helping us tell our story, why, and let’s keep at it. I actually found that process, when you think about it in those terms, it can become easy.” - Fee
- “You have to be a leader. There’s the creative part of making the movie, but there’s also the fact that we had, at our height, over 200 people on the film and I’m their leader. I have to inspire them. Those are new skills I had to learn ‘cause that’s a whole different thing. I could sit in my office, as a storyboard artist, and work on my scene. But to actually get in front of a group and get them inspired, and know how to get their best work out of them and empower them to do their best work and not get in the way of them doing their best work, were all things that I was always trying to juggle and make sure I was doing the healthy version of.” - Fee (**Storyboarding\_01**) - (**Storyboarding\_03**) (**Cars\_Concept\_Drawing**)
- “In a case like Pixar, you give it up with absolute trust. They’ve got it. They’ve handled it. You only have to worry about the voice stuff and in there you rely very heavily on the director because you’re working in a vacuum. There’s nobody around you to do the scenes with. It’s you by yourself in a recording booth so he helps you with the tone of the scene, the energy of the scene...I rely incredibly heavily on the director. More so than in a live action film.” - Fillion

#### **ANIMATION** (Jeremy Lasky, Michael Sparber, Kim White)

- Production designer Jay Shuster headed up the look of the characters. Shuster, whose first film at Pixar was “Cars,” considers himself a car guy. “It’s really how I got my job here,” he says. “My dad worked at GM for 43 years back in Detroit. So, I had a portfolio full of car sketches and an understanding of the car culture at large.”
- “It’s a different kind of automotive engineering that goes into the designs of these characters—it’s more like an experimental alchemy. We have a parameter of a body shell with four wheels on it, a windshield and a very constrained area around the grill and headlights to engineer into a mouth. Beyond that, we exploit space, paint and graphic to define each character.”
- Since 2011, when “Cars 2” was released, Pixar Animation on Studios has updated its rendering system. The introduction on of a new renderer within the anima on world is both welcome and feared. “What’s really great about the new renderer RIS is that it’s more physically accurate,” says Michael Fong, supervising technical director. “So producing images that look like the real world is much easier because it can correctly model how light bounces and interacts with materials.  
“In pre-production, he started going over the storyboards, identifying what kind of effects were called for and how many shots they were facing, in order to develop a plan of attack. In particular, what jumped out at him from those storyboards was the number of shots that his team would have to deal with that involved the characters driving through mud.” -Effects supervisor Jon Reisch
- Kim White, director of photography-lighting, says that the lighters’ role in reflections was almost reversed thanks to the new renderer. “They had to cheat the reflections in previous ‘Cars’ movies,” she says, acknowledging that all new technology comes with a new set of challenges. “Our characters are cars and we want them to look really beautiful, which the reflections really help us accomplish,” she says. “But they’re still characters and the audience needs to read their



emotions, their expressions. There are some reflections that can be distracting, so we have to manage that.”

- Charged with managing the complexity throughout the film, Rangaswamy's team employed tactics like removing parts of the set or characters that aren't visible in a shot, reducing the time to render that shot. “We made the process automatic, which allows a lot of flexibility,” he says. “It made shots that were previously impossible to render possible, and increases the speed of other renders by 30 to 50 percent.”
- “The look of the characters and environments all started in the art department with 2D sketches created while the script was still being developed. “It's up to us to achieve the spirit of the character in 2D before we get the green light to go to clay or go to a rough model,” explains production designer Jay Shuster. “And the way we get there is we provide the modeling team with orthographic drawings – the side, the top, the front and back view of a vehicle - to the best of our 2D translating abilities and drawing abilities. Then, they'll layer that side view image in the computer and start placing those splines.”
- Directing animator Jude Brownbill explained that her team kept the original sketches handy as a reference throughout production. “I think when it comes to animating the characters and finding their personality, we always try and find those drawings that were done early on and make sure they're accessible to the animators so they can look back and see where this character came from and maybe capture something in there,” she says. “If it was a mouth shape or a lip shape, it is something they can spot in the process of figuring out who that character is.”
- “We were just trying to make the best characters we could,” she says. “For those Storm tests, with Armie Hammer's voice, a bunch of animators tried different ideas and we shared them all with Brian. We responded to this mouth shape or that particular expression and pieced the performance together early on with the things we thought were successful and then ran from there.”
- Supervising animator Bobby Podesta's team included over 70 animators at its peak, with over 200 models to deal with. He added that the core and foundation of their work was “making choices [designed to] keep you in that suspension of disbelief, so you're pulled along emotionally. It always comes down to the story.” They were always striving for a tone that was “grounded” to suit the story, “because this story is grounded in real stakes, and real emotional tangibility.”
- RACES
  - For all of the racing sequences, Jeremy Lasky and his team sought to amplify the action. “We studied a lot of NASCAR footage,” he says. “Racing coverage on television has evolved over the 10-plus years since the first ‘Cars.’ We didn't want it to feel like we're a decade behind in terms of race coverage. We want the audience to feel that it's authenticity, but I want something they've never seen before. There are moments you would see on NASCAR and moments when we're down on the track telling the character's story.”
  - Editor Jason Hudak conducted similar research. “I went to the Sonoma races and watched plenty of NASCAR coverage,” he says. “I wanted to get an idea of what's too fast as far as cutting goes, and what audiences are accustomed to seeing during races. Camera-wise, there are some really novel things that broadcasters do now with GoPro and drones.
  - “There's a lot of great racing films out there, too,” continues Hudak. “But unlike those films, we can't go inside the car and show that kinetic action of a driver—the gear shifting and the pedal slamming down. But the angles, the fender-mounted cameras, for example, inspire us to pursue coverage we hadn't considered.”

## **SOUND/MUSIC (Randy Newman)**

- For “Cars 3,” Newman created a score that reflects the heart and high-octane action of the film—21 tracks are included on the soundtrack. According to the composer, some of the cues evoke a L.A. feel, which is new to the franchise. But, says Newman, the film called for a different approach. “One of the differences in ‘Cars 3’ is that very little of it takes place in Radiator Springs,” says Newman. “As a result, there’s almost no music reflective of that locale or the characters therein. I used some of the music slightly altered from ‘Cars’ in spots where Brian [Fee] wanted to evoke an earlier me.”
- Newman’s relationship with Pixar goes back to the studio’s 1995 feature, “Toy Story.” Director John Lasseter’s approach to a scene in the follow-up film, “Toy Story 2,” came full circle in “Cars 3.” “John wanted me, as he said, to ‘play the picture,’” says Newman, who revised a cue in to reflect the action of the scene as if the character were in a live-action film. Newman was reminded of that guidance while scoring “Cars 3.”
- “There’s a montage wherein Lightning goes through the woods in the dark, dodging trees. It’s ultimately his last training race before Florida,” says Newman. Instead of music that emphasized the craziness of the scene, Newman was asked to write something straight that built to a definitive conclusion.
- Newman used a 110-piece orchestra to record the score.

## **PROMOTION (Cars\_Promo\_Tour)**

- “Road to the Races” tour. Life-size, character look-alikes of Lightning McQueen, Cruz Ramirez and Jackson Storm will be rolling into 27 cities coast to coast to celebrate the new movie. “There will be fun activities for the whole family—plus a sneak peek of the movie.” The roster of cities includes Miami, Dallas, Chicago, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Denver and Los Angeles, among others—the full list is available at [CARS3tour.com](http://CARS3tour.com). The “Road to the Races” nationwide tour wraps up in California with a visit to NASCAR at Sonoma at the Sonoma Raceway June 24-25, 2017, and the life-size character cars will also roll onto the red carpet for the “Cars 3” world premiere on Saturday, June 10, 2017.
- Autotrader’s personalized search functionality, the 30-second Autotrader television spot features the well-known cast of characters from *Cars 3* showcasing their distinctive personalities. Autotrader rallies viewers to find the car that best fits their lifestyle. The spot concludes with the tagline – “Every car has a personality. Find the one that fits yours at Autotrader.”
- Waze is the world’s largest community-based traffic and navigation app — and it’s awesome. As if the functionality of the app wasn’t fantastic enough, a new update allows users to have their virtual car in the app become Lightning McQueen or Jackson Storm (including the actors’ actual voices).
- HJC HELMETS- Racing motorcycle helmet and *Cars 3*? These new high-end helmets with Lightning McQueen and Jackson Storm designs



## **BOX OFFICE**

- Total Lifetime Grosses (As of June 21st):\$70,277,151
- Domestic: \$70,277,151
  - + Foreign: \$21,324,784
  - = Worldwide: \$91,601,935
- Domestic Summary
  - Opening Weekend: \$\$53,547,000
  - (#1 rank, 4,256 theaters, \$12,615 average)
  - % of Total Gross: 76.4%
- > View All Weekends
  - Widest Release: 4,256 theaters
  - In Release: 6 days / 0.9 weeks

## **RECEPTION**

- IMDB: 7.4
- Cinemascore: A
- RT: 66% Tatometer, 79% Audience

## **SEQUEL/LEGACY**