

**HQ PHOTOS TO USE:** <https://www.warnerbros.com/game-night#expanded>

### **GAME NIGHT (2018)**

- Released on February 23rd, 2018
- 1 Hour 40 minutes
- \$37 million Budget
- Directed by John Francis Daley, Jonathan Goldstein
- Written by Mark Perez
- Armory Films, ArtImage Entertainment, Black Bear Pictures
- Rated R for language, sexual references and some violence

### **QUICK THOUGHTS**

- Marisa Serafini
- Phil Svitek
- Demetri Panos

### **DEVELOPMENT**

- In May 2016, Jonathan Goldstein and John Francis Daley have been hired to rewrite and direct the New Line comedy
- “We were kind of working on this as *Spider-Man* was gearing up to be released.” -Daley
- “John Fox, who is a producer on the movie. He used to be an executive at DreamWorks and I sold stuff to him there, so I've known him for years. He called me one day. He had just started working for [producer] John Davis, and he calls me one day. "I've got a title. *Game Night*." And he's really good at ideas and titles. So I went off and thought, "What would be the best version?" I've always loved *Three Amigos* and *Tropic Thunder*, where people think something is going on — they think it's safe — but really something dangerous is going on. I'd been invited to parties where there is an intricate "We're doing a murder mystery" and weird things like that, so I mashed them together. What if we did a murder mystery night over the night, and a real murder happens” -Perez
- “We worked on the pitch, and we were lucky enough to get in a room with Jason Bateman. He liked the idea, and we worked on it with him for, I don't know, six months or a year, and then sold it to New Line as a pitch.” -Perez
- Script sold in either 2013 or '14.
- It was officially a go movie when they got Rachel McAdams.

### **WRITING (Mark Perez)**

- “The general notion of a game night among friends that goes very wrong and becomes a crime movie was there. We changed a number of the specifics and the actual criminal plot we're following.” -Goldstein
- “I was not [involved]. I went off and was writing other things.” -Perez

### **STORY/TOPICS**

### **CAST:**

- “With all of our actors, we tried to be as grounded as we could and not necessarily go for the big laugh or broad performance. We wanted it to feel like a real world in which crazy things happen.” -Goldstein

#### **JASON BATEMAN (Max)**

- “[Jason] was actually attached as a producer before [Goldstein & Daley] even came on, so it was just a question of convincing him to play the lead. He knew that our intention was to do something a little more ambitious, and I think that appealed to him.” -Goldstein

#### **RACHEL MCADAMS (Annie)**

- “Any opportunity to give Rachel something funny to do, we would take it, because we’re such huge fans of the comedies that she did, but it’s been a while since she had done them, so it was refreshing to see her in this light.” -Goldstein

#### **KYLE CHANDLER (Brooks)**

- "I would always say, 'The last thing I want you to know about me is, I am funny.' I figured that would get me a job one day," says Chandler, 52, laughing. "That speech finally paid off. Some sucker believed it."
- FIGHTING: "I smacked my ankle and almost cracked it diving through a fireplace," Chandler says. "And at one point, I grabbed a guy against the wall, my finger got caught in his sweater, and I broke it."
- "It's understated, but they were really funny together in *Friday Night Lights*," says Jesse Plemons, who starred as Landry, one of Coach Taylor's players, and reunites with Chandler in *Game Nights*. "Kyle has an interesting sense of humor. It was fun to go full circle with him on this." -Plemons

#### **BILLY MAGNUSSEN**

- Classically trained at a drama conservatory UNCSA. University of North Carolina School of the Arts
- “The writers had made such a tight and amazing script, which was what drew me to the project in the first place, but when we were all on set together they molded a few things to our personalities.” -Magnussen
- “[Billy and I] went for some drinks and hung out and we get on really well now. We're proper pals. I think he's one of the funniest people I've ever met.” -Horgan
- “This film was so difficult to shoot because everyone was laughing the whole time. You know like when the teacher is up in class and she's writing on the chalkboard, and you make eye contact with your friend across the class, and you can't stop laughing and you try to hold it in and it hurts? And you have to pee a little because it hurts so much? That's how shooting this whole film was. It was so hard to keep a straight face.” -Magnussen

#### **SHARON HORGAN (Sarah)**

- Had to put herself on tape to audition for the first time in — well, she can't remember the last time she auditioned. She asked her daughter to film her doing a few scenes from the script in their London attic on an iPhone and sent it into the studio. It worked.
- “Sharon we cast when she was in England, so [Magnusson & Sharon] met for the first time on Day 1 of shooting, and they immediately became best of friends.”

- Well-known in the U.K., particularly in her home country of Ireland, thanks to BBC's "Pulling," which ran for two seasons beginning in 2006, and "Catastrophe," which she co-created with American comedian Rob Delaney.
- Horgan also created and wrote HBO's "Divorce."
- "'Game Night' came up literally just at the right time. I had a space. I still had to keep writing, but I had a genuine space where I could do it. It's something I'd like to do more of. Not in a big sort of game plan way, but just because I like movies and it would be fun." -Horgan
- She was one of [Daley & Goldstein's] first choices for the role of Sarah
- "The role needed someone who could have this power dynamic shift over the course of the movie," Goldstein says.
- "It was very difficult to make it through a scene with [Sharon] because she is so gosh darn funny and talented."- Magnussen

#### **LAMORNE MORRIS** (Kevin)

- Lamorne Morris is an American actor, comedian and television personality. He is best known for playing Winston in the Fox sitcom New Girl. As a game show host, he hosted the Cartoon Network game show BrainRush. He also worked for BET in the past. He is Originally from Chicago, before wanting to become an actor, Morris wanted to be a basketball player. Morris studied at College of DuPage

#### **KYLIE BUNBURY** (Michelle)

- "Kylie [Bunbury] and Lamorne [Morris] had their own unique banter, and the fact that they are probably the youngest couple in the group yet they feel like the oldest in that they've been together for the longest was kind of a unique take on an old couple." -Goldstein

#### **JESSE PLEMONS** (Gary)

- "The character of Gary that Jesse Plemons plays was a very different character when we first read it, where he was this sort of brash, loud, rude, bombastic guy, and we thought it might be more interesting to have someone who is quiet and hyper-articulate and polite to a point, but also very unsettling." -Daley
- "When we got Jesse Plemons, he really turned that character into something truly unique and original and different from even what we were entirely imagining." -Daley
- "It's a testament to the studio really, because you wouldn't normally pitch Jesse Plemons for that big of a role in a comedy and have the studio immediately be on board with it, but they were like, "Oh, we get what makes this fresh and funny and original." They were totally cool with hiring him." -Goldstein
- The character of Gary Kingsbury was named after John Francis Daley's wife, Corinne Kingsbury

#### **MICHAEL C. HALL** (The Bulgarian)

- Michael C. Hall was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, to Janice (Styons), a guidance counselor, and William Carlyle Hall, who worked for IBM. Michael is a graduate of NYU's Master of Fine Arts program in acting. He is known for the titular character "Dexter" in Dexter (2006) and as mortician "David Fisher" in Six Feet Under (2001). His most recent performance on Broadway was as "Hedwig" in "Hedwig and the Angry Inch". Previously, Hall portrayed the emcee in "Cabaret", "Billy Flynn" in "Chicago" and "John Jones" in

"The Realistic Joneses". Hall has starred in nearly a dozen major off-Broadway plays, including "Macbeth" for the New York Shakespeare Festival, "Cymbeline" for the New York Shakespeare Festival at Central Park's Delacorte Theater, "Timon of Athens" and "Henry V" at the Public, "The English Teachers" for Manhattan Class Company, "Corpus Christi" at the Manhattan Theatre Club, "Mr. Marmalade" with the Roundabout Theatre Company and "Skylight" at the Mark Taper Forum. Michael C. Hall is performing in independent motion pictures, such as Cold in July (2014) and Kill Your Darlings (2013).

### **SYMBOLISM/TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS**

- In the film, Jason Bateman and Rachel McAdams makes a joke about child actors not amounting to much. Bateman was a child actor famous for his role on Silver Spoons
- Throughout the film various children's games are played while trying to navigate the plot. "Simon says" is played when Rachel McAdams is holding the gun to the kidnapers in the bar. "Hot Potato" is played with the egg. "Charades" is played between Jason Bateman and Rachel McAdams at the airport
- Various connections to the game "Monopoly" are found throughout the film including: Jesse Plemons dog (piece), Kyle Chandlers car (piece), Kyle Chandler buying new property on Boardwalk (bord spot), etc

### **DIRECTING** (John Francis Daley, Jonathan Goldstein)

- Jason Bateman was originally set to direct the film, but Daley and Goldstein would only work on a rewrite of the script if they could also direct
- The duo earned the biggest hit of their career last year with Sony's *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (\$880 million).
- "We really saw an opportunity with this one that wasn't just a straight ahead comedy but also to lean into the thriller aspects of it." -Goldstein

### **PRODUCTION** (Barry Peterson)

- Pre Production January 2017
- Started filming April 2017.
- "It was a conscious decision on our part to try to create a sense of unease with the audience, and that was in our approach with even the camera work. We tried to keep it sort of mechanical and soulless so that we don't give the audience the benefit of having a cameraman there in the scenes where we are supposed to be kind of freaked out. And just in the lighting. Honestly, we weren't entirely sure if it was going to work, because it was kind of a new way to approach a comedy, but fortunately it only served to amplify the comedy because I think that level of discomfort that you get from those choices serves to make people relieved when there is a joke, because it was kind of see-sawing back and forth between those two feelings." - Daley

### **EDITING/VFX** (David Egan, Jamie Gross, Gregory Plotkin)

- Known for Role Models, Vacation, Savages, A Very Harold & Kumar Christmas

### **SOUND/MUSIC** (Cliff Martinez)

- Scored in December 2017
- Scoring for *Game Night* took place at the Eastwood Scoring Stage at Warner Bros. Studios

- Conducted by orchestrator Randy Miller, who led the 74-piece ensemble of the Hollywood Studio Symphony.
- Additional music composers Thor Laewe and Pete Adams, music editor Louis Schultz, booth reader Greg Tripi, score editor David Channing, and ProTools recordist Larry Mah
- Soundtrack Available On WaterTower Music
- "This score may have been the biggest musical challenge of my career," said Martinez. "When it comes to comedy, I doubt I'm at the top of most directors' short list. I'm the guy you call when the film's characters are doing drugs, getting shot, stabbed, beaten or blown up -unless of course, those things are supposed to be funny."- Martinez
- "The first thing that the directors said to me was, 'Don't try to be funny. That's our job. Just be yourself,'" Martinez joked.

## PROMOTION

- *Game Night* was originally scheduled for release on February 14, 2018, by Warner Bros. Pictures
- The release date was later pushed back to March 2, 2018, before being moved up to February 23, 2018

## BOX OFFICE

- As of February 25, 2018, *Game Night* has grossed \$16.6 million in the United States and Canada, and \$5.2 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$21.8 million, against a production budget of \$37 million
- In the United States and Canada, *Game Night* was released alongside *Annihilation* and *Every Day*, and was projected to gross \$13–21 million from 3,488 theaters in its opening weekend
- The film made \$5.6 million on its first day (including \$1 million from Thursday night previews). It ended up making \$16.6 million over the weekend, finishing second behind holdover *Black Panther*

## RECEPTION

- Rotten Tomatoes: 82% based on 149 reviews
- The website's critical consensus reads, "With a talented cast turned loose on a loaded premise — and a sharp script loaded with dark comedy and unexpected twists — *Game Night* might be more fun than the real thing."
- Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "B+" on an A+ to F scale, while PostTrak reported filmgoers gave a 78% overall positive score
- Alonso Duralde of *TheWrap* praised the cast, writing "Fast and funny, filled with memorable characters, and able to balance slapstick and violence without spilling too far in either direction, this frenetic R-rated farce is that rare comic gem that lands on all the spaces without ever going to jail."

## SEQUEL/LEGACY

- "New Line keeps joking about a spinoff with Jesse Plemons' character because it's such a rich and layered character. But I don't know. We would absolutely want to do another film of this ilk again, I don't know if it would be a sequel per se. But just straddling the thriller-comedy space I think was incredibly satisfying for us." -Daley

