

## **TAG (2018)**

- June 15th, 2018
- 1 hr 40 minutes
- \$28,000,000 (estimated) budget
- Directed by Jeff Tomsic
- Written by Rob McKittrick and Mark Steilen
- Broken Road Productions, New Line Cinema
- Rated R for language throughout, crude sexual content, drug use and brief nudity

## **QUICK THOUGHTS**

- Marisa Serafini
- Phil Svitek
- Demetri Panos

## **DEVELOPMENT**

- The film is based on a real-life group of friends from Spokane, Washington, known for playing a month-long game of tag every May over a 23-year period
- The game was first featured as a true story published in *The Wall Street Journal* in January 2013
- They would entertain themselves by playing the schoolyard game during breaks at Gonzaga Preparatory School
- The current game of tag started in 1990
- The film is based on a real-life group of friends from Spokane, Washington, known for playing a month-long game of tag every May over a 23-year period
- after which they began receiving offers to adapt their story into a movie. They sold the rights to their story the next month. It was initially developed with Will Ferrell and Jack Black in mind; however, both eventually left the project.
- Based on the *Wall Street Journal* article entitled "It Takes Planning, Caution to Avoid Being It" by Russell Adams

## **WRITING** (Rob McKittrick, Mark Steilen)

- McKittrick directed the 2005 independent film *Waiting...*, starring Ryan Reynolds, and wrote the sequel to the film, *Still Waiting...*
- Steilen was not only a writer of the film but also a producer
- Steilen is known as a writer and producer that has worked on *Shameless*, *Will* and *Mozart in the Jungle*
- In the real life version of events, the game is played in January however the writers chose to set the movie in May instead

## **STORY/TOPICS**

At nine years old, a group of tight-knit friends--Hoagie, Jerry, Bob, Chili and Kevin--created a game of tag that they played through the month of May. After thirty years, it was the thing that

brought them together, even when their lives took them in different directions. However, this might be the last, as it seems like Jerry--who's never been tagged--might quit.

The movie begins with Hoagie, applying for a janitorial job, despite the fact that he is already a successful veterinarian. Hoagie's real intention is to infiltrate the office of a big insurance company so that Hoagie can tag its new CEO, Bob Callahan.

In disguise, Hoagie infiltrates a conference room where Bob is being interviewed by Rebecca, a reporter for the Wall Street Journal, about this company.

Entranced, Wall Street Journal reporter Rebecca tables her questions and says that this 30-year-old game of tag is the REAL story. So the journalist joins them as they criss-cross America to round up the rest of the team.

Hoagie has a plan to trap Jerry, the only member of the playing fivesome who's never been tagged. They're gonna nab him at his upcoming wedding.

So the crew heads back to the Pacific Northwest, land of their youth, to confront the cagey Jerry, whose bride-to-be begs the crew not to prank their wedding while playing.

## **CAST:**

Ed Helms as Hogan "Hoagie" Malloy

- The gang's off-the-record organizer that takes the game the most seriously
- His wife, played by Isla Fisher, is just as into the game as he is

Jeremy Renner as Jerry Pierce

- A fitness guru that has never been "it"
- Jerry's about to get married and quit the game forever. This is the last opportunity for the other guys to finally get him
- Jerry wants his wedding to remain a "tag-free zone", in order to do this he sets up different traps including a trick set that replicates Hogan's childhood bedroom along with decoys of himself

Jon Hamm as Bob Callahan

- A corporate wheeler-dealer drops everything to join the mission
- "Hamm has rarely been this appealingly easygoing and jocular on screen, and it's a good look for him." -*LA Times*
- Caught in a 3 way love-triangle with Rashida Jones' character, Cheryl, and Chilli

Jake Johnson as Randy "Chilli" Cilliano

- Known from *New Girl*
- Goofy, divorced stoner
- Involved in a love triangle with Rashida Jones' character and Hamm's character

Hannibal Buress as Kevin Sable

- “The only one who brings any consistent comedy to this is Bures, who doesn’t deliver lines so much as observations of how stupid everything is.” -*The Young Folks*
- Despite playing their classmate Hannibal Bures is 12-5 years younger than his co-stars
- “Hannibal Bures’s deadpan humor as Kevin acts as a fantastic anchor for the madness spinning around him” -*Cinema Blend*
- Bures hilariously interacts with Carrie Brownstein of *Portlandia* as his psychologist
- Plays the “lovable nerd”

#### Isla Fisher as Anna Malloy

- Hoagie’s intense wife, she takes the game just as seriously as he does and longs to be a player in the long-running game of tag
- Fisher was praised for her role as being charmingly manic

#### **DIRECTING** (Jeff Tomsic)

- This was Tomsic’s directorial debut
- “Director Jeff Tomsic is not incompetent as the movie is shot well enough and doesn’t have any poor construction, but he clearly wasn’t given too much to work with and therefore had nothing to offer an audience.” -*The Young Folks*
- Known from *Broad City*, *The Detour* and *Idiotsitter*
- “Tomsic frequently uses the drastic camera speed change practically trademarked by Guy Ritchie and Zach Snyder. This style, used with ludicrous self-seriousness by Ritchie and Snyder, creates the a sense of visual irony for what’s essentially a bunch of dudes participating in a playground game in the suburbs.” -Oktay Ege Kozak, *Paste Magazine*

#### **TRIVIA**

- The film reunited Ed Helms and Rashida Jones, who served character roles in *The Office*
- Patrick Schultheis (one of the original taggers) grew up to be a lawyer, he drafted a quasi-contract
  - He called it a ‘Tag Participation Agreement.’ The rules said, you can only tag in February, no tag backs and if you ask someone if they are it, they have to answer truthfully and reasonably promptly.
- “We don’t stop playing because we get old; we get old because we stop playing,” is a mantra repeated by the character throughout the movie

#### **PRODUCTION/CINEMATOGRAPHY** (Larry Blanford)

- Principal photography began in June 2017 in Atlanta, Georgia
- On the third day of production, Jeremy Renner fractured his right elbow and left wrist after falling 20 feet while performing a stunt
  - He ended up performing the stunt a second time before going to the hospital, and the production team used CGI to remove his casts in post-production
- “These characters and these actors couldn’t be less alike, but their chemistry together is perfection.” -*Entertainment Weekly*

### **EDITING/VFX** (Josh Crockett)

- According to statements from Renner and director Jeff Tomsic, CGI was only minimally employed, but mostly used to remove Renner's casts on both of his arms

### **SOUND/MUSIC** (Germaine Franco)

- "The early-'90s music cues (A Tribe Called Quest, the Beastie Boys, the Pixies) add an infectious extra layer of nostalgia." -*Entertainment Weekly*

### **PROMOTION**

- Tagline: "Based on a True Story. We're Not Kidding."
- "The film is selling itself on the rather interesting hook that it's, seriously, based on a true story." -*Cinema Blend*

### **BOX OFFICE**

- As of June 19th, 2018:
  - Domestic: \$14,600,000
  - Foreign: \$1,500,000
  - Worldwide: \$16,100,000
  - (#3 rank, 3,382 theaters, \$4,317 average)
  - % of Total Gross: 100.0%
  - 3,382 theaters
- Distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures
- Earned \$14.6 million in 3,382 theaters over opening weekend
- *Tag* was up against *Incredibles 2* and *Superfly*
- The film made \$1.3 million from Thursday night previews

### **RECEPTION**

- Rotten Tomatoes: 57%
- IMDB: 7.1/10
- Cinemascore: B+
- "Based on a true story about fortysomething manchildren still playing tag, this bro-bonding comedy is all over the place, but fueled by a terrific cast and a partytime atmosphere that might be just what you're looking for on a hot summer night." -Peter Travers, *Rolling Stone*
- "The result is a mixed bag, but there are just enough laughs from this likeable cast to make this movie a worthwhile summer distraction." -Mathew DeKinder, *Suburban Journals of St. Louis*
- "The cast is a likable bunch, and I can see how "Tag" might go down nicely with a couple of beers beforehand; it's definitely funny in spots, in a we're-making-this-up-as-we-go-along sort of way. But despite a last-act bid for pathos (quickly shuffled aside for those real-life videos), there just isn't much here. Why not

make a documentary about the actual Tag Brothers, whose members include a priest, a Nordstrom executive and a guy known as Beef? “ -*The Seattle Times*

- That’s a weirdly muted note to end such an otherwise over-the-top — conceptually and physically — comedy.
- “*Tag’s* occupation of the border between biopic and fictitious comedy is rather interesting, considering how many of the actual tactics from the real-life source material are adapted to great effect in the film’s happenings.” -*Cinema Blend*

#### **SEQUELS/LEGACY**

- Helms said if there was to be a sequel he would want Tom Cruise, Matt Damon, and Jackie Chan to be in it