

On the Count of Three

On the Count of Three is a 2021 American black comedy-drama film directed by Jerrod Carmichael (in his feature directorial debut) and written by Ari Katcher and Ryan Welch. It stars Carmichael and Christopher Abbott as two best friends who make a suicide pact and have one final day to take care of unfinished business. Tiffany Haddish, J. B. Smoove, Lavell Crawford, and Henry Winkler also star.

On the Count of Three had its world premiere at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, and was released in select theaters and on-demand by Annapurna Pictures and Orion Pictures through United Artists Releasing on May 13, 2022. It received generally positive reviews.

Plot

Despite being offered a promotion, depressed mulch factory worker Val tries to commit suicide in a toilet stall at work, but stops when his annoying co-worker enters the restroom while singing "It's a Great Day to Be Alive" to himself. Val breaks up with his girlfriend Natasha and quits his job, then helps his best friend Kevin escape from the psychiatric hospital where he was placed after he had also tried to commit suicide three days earlier. Val tells Kevin that suicide is the answer, despite what people are taught, and the two agree to simultaneously shoot each other in the face. Kevin panics and smacks Val's hand away when Val pulls the trigger, then convinces Val that they should at least celebrate their last day of life. While the two eat at a diner and discuss what to do with their final day, Kevin's former school bully walks in with his wife and child and joyfully reminisces about severely injuring him.

Kevin's main goal is to kill Dr. Brenner, the child psychiatrist who molested him. However, when a receptionist tells Val and Kevin that Brenner does not arrive to work until late in the afternoon, they decide to return to his workplace later. Val learns that Natasha is pregnant, and tells Kevin that he had planned to marry her but backed out because he was scared. Val and Kevin ride dirt bikes at a motorcycle park owned by their friend Donny, but Val falls off his bike and cuts his leg open. Kevin aims his gun at a rude gas station attendant who makes him wait to buy medical supplies for Val, but he insists that he is using the gun to

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Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>Jerrod Carmichael</u>
Written by	Ari Katcher Ryan Welch
Produced by	David Carrico Adam Paulsen Jerrod Carmichael Jimmy Price Ari Katcher <u>Tom Werner</u> Jake Densen
Starring	Jerrod Carmichael <u>Christopher Abbott</u> <u>Tiffany Haddish</u> <u>J. B. Smoove</u> <u>Lavell Crawford</u> <u>Henry Winkler</u>

send a message rather than rob the station and pays for the supplies before leaving. Val visits his father Lyndell at his car workshop and tries to retrieve the money Lyndell had stolen from him when he was younger, causing a fistfight which ends when Kevin hits Lyndell with a tire iron and Val takes the money. Val goes to the jewelry store where he bought the ring for Natasha and returns it. He visits Natasha and tries to give her money to support her, but she criticizes him and encourages him to see a therapist. In the meantime, Kevin goes for a drive. He sees his former school bully and contemplates killing him, but changes his mind after watching him play with his daughter.

Late in the afternoon, Kevin goes through with his plan and visits Brenner. He forces Brenner to get on his knees and tries to shoot him, but forgets to take the safety off. Brenner hits Kevin and takes the gun away from him, then lectures him for forgetting about the safety. Val arrives and sees Brenner waving the gun at an injured Kevin; mistakenly thinking Brenner is about to shoot Kevin, he shoots Brenner in the head. In the car, Val tells Kevin that he does not want to die and that he would rather live so he can be there for his child. Attempting to escape a police chase, the two visit Donny and give him the keys to Val's car before riding away on dirt bikes while the police are distracted by Donny. Val and Kevin are spotted by police helicopters and decide to stop running away. Kevin tries to convince Val that suicide is still the answer to their problems, but Val does not change his mind about wanting to live. Kevin tells Val to blame Brenner's murder on him, then shoots himself in the head. A few years later, Val receives a Father's Day visit in prison from Natasha and their daughter.

Cinematography	Marshall Adams
Edited by	<u>Tom Eagles</u>
Music by	<u>Owen Pallett</u>
Production companies	Valparaiso Pictures <u>Werner Entertainment</u> Morningside Entertainment
Distributed by	<u>United Artists</u> <u>Releasing</u> (under <u>Annapurna Pictures</u> and <u>Orion Pictures</u>)
Release dates	January 29, 2021 (<u>Sundance</u>) May 13, 2022 (United States)
Running time	86 minutes ^[1]
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	\$62,155

Cast

- Jerrod Carmichael as Val
- Christopher Abbott as Kevin
- Tiffany Haddish as Natasha
- Lavell Crawford as Donny
- J. B. Smoove as Lyndell
- Henry Winkler as Dr. Brenner
- Ryan McDonald as Brian
- Jared Abrahamson as Wyatt

Production

In June 2019, it was announced that Jerrod Carmichael and Christopher Abbott would star in the film and that Carmichael would make his directorial debut from a screenplay by Ari Katcher and Ryan Welch.^[2] In November, it was announced that Tiffany Haddish, Henry Winkler, J. B. Smoove, and Lavell Crawford had

joined the cast. David Carrico and Adam Paulsen agreed to produce under their Valparaiso Pictures banner, alongside [Tom Werner](#) serving as a producer under his Werner Entertainment banner. [Principal photography](#) commencing that same month.^[3]

Release

The film had its world premiere at the [2021 Sundance Film Festival](#), where Katcher and Welch were awarded the [Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award](#).^[4] Shortly after, [Annapurna Pictures](#) and [MGM's Orion Pictures](#) acquired U.S. distribution rights to the film, which was released through their joint venture [United Artists Releasing](#).^[5] The film's first trailer was released on April 27, 2022, beginning with a slate promoting the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#).^[6] It received a limited theatrical release and a digital release on May 13, 2022. It was also released on the streaming service [Hulu](#) and labeled as part of their "[Hulu Originals](#)" on August 17.^[7]

Reception

Box office

In the United States and Canada, the film earned \$36,822 from 19 theaters in its opening weekend.^[8] It ultimately grossed between \$62,131 and \$62,155 at the worldwide box office.^{[9][10]}

Critical response

On [Rotten Tomatoes](#), the film holds an approval rating of 85% based on 114 reviews, with an average rating of 7.1/10. The website's critics consensus reads, "It's occasionally uneven, but *On the Count of Three* finds director/star Jerrod Carmichael attempting an ambitious blend of drama and dark comedy—and often succeeding."^[1] [Metacritic](#), which uses a [weighted average](#), assigned the film a score of 74 out of 100, based on 24 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.^[11]

David Ehrlich of [IndieWire](#) gave the film an A− and wrote, "Like a game of [Russian roulette](#), this is a movie that would have seemed embarrassingly stupid if things had gone wrong. It's a dangerous and somehow enjoyable movie that dances around the edge of an open wound from start to finish as it risks making light of the heaviest things that so many of its viewers will ever have to carry. But it's exhilarating—a little at first, and then a hell of a lot—to see these characters find the kind of happiness worth dying for."^[12] Benjamin Lee of [The Guardian](#) gave the film 3/5 stars and said, "While it's ultimately a little too messy to

work quite as well as it could have, given the interesting and ambitious ingredients, *On the Count of Three* is proof that Carmichael is a director to be excited about, hoping that perhaps he finds time to write his next script himself."^[13]

Accolades

Year	Award	Category	Subject	Result
2021	Sundance Film Festival ^[14]	Grand Jury Prize - US Dramatic	Jerrod Carmichael	Nominated
		Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award	Ari Katcher Ryan Welch	Won
	IndieWire Critics Poll ^[15]	Best Films Opening in 2022	<i>On the Count of Three</i>	Nominated

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External links



Film portal



United States portal



Comedy portal

- Official website (<https://www.unitedartistsreleasing.com/on-the-count-of-three/home/>)
- *On the Count of Three* (<https://www.hulu.com/movie/on-the-count-of-three-e6a01acf-c10f-44e-a-b155-bd5b4d85b121>) on Hulu
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- *On the Count of Three* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/on_the_count_of_three) at Rotten Tomatoes

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