

Rally Road Racers, formerly known as ***Silk Road Rally***,^[2] is a 2023 animated sports comedy film directed and written by Ross Venokur. The film stars Jimmy O. Yang, J.K. Simmons, Chloe Bennet, Lisa Lu, Sharon Horgan, Catherine Tate and John Cleese. It follows novice racer Zhi as he tries to save his rural village from villainous racer and real-estate developer Archie Vainglorious.

The film is an international co-production between United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States, and is produced by REP Productions 6 Ltd., Kintop Pictures, Riverstone Pictures, Vanguard Animation, Virtuso Productions and Lipsync Post. The film was theatrically released in the United States by Viva Kids on May 12, 2023.^[3] Despite having a limited release in theaters, the film received favorable reviews from critics.

Plot

In a world of anthropomorphic animals, Zhi (Jimmy O. Yang) is a slow loris living with his grandmother in a rural Chinese village. As a child, his idol is cane toad racer Archie Vainglorious (John Cleese), but as a young adult he discovers Vainglorious Industries' plans to demolish his village and put in cane toad housing. Initially hopeful that he can reach an understanding with Vainglorious, Zhi instead finds him boastful and dismissive. Vainglorious does, however, agree to challenge Zhi in an upcoming rally race for the fate of the village.

Gnash (J. K. Simmons), a retired goat racer-turned-mechanic, reluctantly agrees to help Zhi train, out of a sense of duty to Zhi's deceased mother. Gnash also provides Zhi with a car and rides with him in it. The race has no rules, and Zhi discovers the deep-pocketed Vainglorious is willing to cheat and play dirty at every opportunity. Zhi also struggles with performance anxiety when he's in the lead, something Gnash struggles to talk him out of.

During downtime between the stages of the race, Zhi meets and then falls in love with Shelby (Chloe Bennet), a fellow slow loris. Unbeknownst to him, she's working for Vainglorious and feeding the latter the information Zhi tells her. Discovering that she shares Zhi's romantic feelings, Shelby feels increasingly torn over her duplicity, and finally breaks with Vainglorious.

Rally Road Racers



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Ross Venokur
Written by	Ross Venokur
Produced by	Vashu Bhagnani Nik Bower Deepak Nayar <u>Peter S. Seaman</u> <u>John H. Williams</u>
Starring	<u>Jimmy O. Yang</u> <u>J. K. Simmons</u> <u>Chloe Bennet</u> <u>Lisa Lu</u> <u>Sharon Horgan</u> <u>Catherine Tate</u> <u>John Cleese</u>
Cinematography	Alexei Nechytaylo
Edited by	Adam Garner

With help from the other racers, who are sympathetic to him, Zhi is able to defeat Vainglorious and save his village. Vainglorious throws a fit and then has to face the wrath of his family, who had a financial stake in him winning the race.

Voice cast

- [Jimmy O. Yang](#) as Zhi, a young Chinese [slow loris](#) who aspires to be a racer, the main protagonist
- [J. K. Simmons](#) as Gnash, a Russian [goat](#) and retired racer who is Zhi's mentor
- [Chloe Bennet](#) as Shelby, a slow loris who is Zhi's love interest
- [Lisa Lu](#) as Granny Bai, an elderly slow loris who is Zhi's grandmother
- [Sharon Horgan](#) as Abby Jacks, an Australian-accented [red kangaroo](#) who narrates the Silk Road Rally
- [Catherine Tate](#) as Juni, a Swedish [reindeer](#) who narrates the Silk Road Rally alongside Abby Jacks
- [John Cleese](#) as Archie Vainglorious, the main antagonist, a [cane toad](#) who has plans to take down the Slow Loris village
- [Naomi McDonald](#) as Adelina, a female seahorse and Beppe's wife, who befriends Zhi during the race.
- [Kerry Shale](#) as Beppe, a pregnant male seahorse and Adelina's husband, who befriends Zhi during the race.

Production

During the production of *[Charming](#)*, Venokur came up with the film's idea and planned to make a [koala](#) as the main character. He changed the lead character into a slow loris in order to focus the idea of a "slow-moving animal who wants to be a race car driver".

The film took over three years to be made. Animation was handled by ReDefine with a team of over 200 artists. Pre-production, storyboard and compositing were done at [Montreal](#) facilities, animation and lighting were done in [Mumbai](#), and post-production in [London](#). The film was animated using [Maya](#) and rendered on Clarisse. ^[4] Visual effects supervisor Alexei Nechytaylo cited films like *[Rush](#)* and *[Senna](#)* as influences for the racing scenes, and well spent several days in [Shanghai](#) to study settings and Chinese culture.

Reception

Box office

Music by	Tom Howe
Production companies	<div>REP</div> <div>Productions 6 Ltd.</div> <div>Kintop Pictures</div> <div>Riverstone Pictures</div> <div>Vanguard Animation</div> <div>Virtuso Productions</div> <div>Lipsync Post</div>
Distributed by	<div>Viva Kids (United States)</div> <div>Vertigo Releasing (United Kingdom)</div>
Release date	May 12, 2023
Running time	93 minutes
Countries	<div>United Arab Emirates</div> <div>United Kingdom</div> <div>United States</div>
Language	English
Box office	\$2.9 million ^[1]

Rally Road Racers was released in the United States on May 12, 2023, and placed 17th its opening weekend. It made \$419,717 in its opening weekend and finished its domestic run with \$744,169. Combined with an international gross of \$2,154,107, it has made \$2,898,276 as of February 2024.^[1]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 73% of 22 critics' reviews are positive.^[5]

References

1. "Rally Road Racers - Box Office Mojo" (https://www.boxofficemojo.com/title/tt8417168/?ref_=bo_se_r_1). Box Office Mojo. Retrieved 1 February 2024.
2. "Viva Kids Puts 'Rally Road Racers' on Track for NorAm Release" (<https://www.animationmagazine.net/2023/03/viva-kids-puts-rally-road-racers-on-track-for-noram-release/>). Animation Magazine. 27 March 2023. Retrieved 27 March 2023.
3. Grobar, Matt (27 March 2023). "Viva Kids Takes North America On Animated Family Film 'Rally Road Racers' With Jimmy O. Yang, J.K. Simmons, Chloe Bennet & More" (<https://deadline.com/2023/03/rally-road-racers-release-date-jimmy-o-yang-jk-simmons-movie-1235309783/>). Deadline Hollywood. Retrieved 27 March 2023.
4. "Know how VFX studio ReDefine delivered 1,700 shots creating distinctive and unique characters for 'Rally Road Racers' " (<https://www.animationxpress.com/latest-news/know-how-vfx-studio-redefine-delivered-1700-shots-creating-distinctive-and-unique-characters-for-rally-road-racers/>). Animationxpress. 16 October 2023. Retrieved 16 October 2023.
5. "Rally Road Racers - Rotten Tomatoes" (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/rally_road_racers). Rotten Tomatoes. Retrieved 5 October 2023.

External links

- Official website (<https://riverstonepictures.com/film/rally-road-racers>)
 - *Rally Road Racers* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8417168/>) at IMDb
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