

Goodnight Mommy (2022 film)

Goodnight Mommy is a 2022 American psychological horror film directed by Matt Sobel and written by Kyle Warren. It is a remake of the 2014 Austrian film *of the same name*. The film stars Naomi Watts, Cameron and Nicholas Crovetti, Crystal Lucas-Perry, Jeremy Bobb, and Peter Hermann. It follows twin brothers who suspect their mother was switched with an impostor.

The film was announced in early 2021, naming Sobel as director, Warren as the scriptwriter and Watts as the star. The rest of the cast were announced later and principal photography began from June to August that same year.

Goodnight Mommy was released on Prime Video by Amazon Studios on September 16, 2022. The film received mixed reviews from critics, who praised Watts' performance, but criticized its writing and deemed it "inferior" and "unnecessary" compared to the original film.

Plot

Twin brothers Elias and Lukas have stayed with their father since their parents divorced. When they return home to live with their estranged mother, a former actress, they are disturbed to find her whole head covered in a bandage, like a white balaclava. Mother (who is never named) explains she has had cosmetic surgery. She gives the boys some house rules, which include not entering her room or the barn. While playing in the fields, the boys can't resist exploring the barn, where they find their old toys. Mother discovers they've been in the barn and punishes them by decreeing that from now on, they must stay indoors.

Mother's behavior unsettles the boys. She does not seem interested in reconnecting with them; she drinks heavily, appears angry, and will not sing the lullaby she sang to them as children. Elias also discovers Mother has thrown away a drawing he made of the three of them. During the night, Elias overhears Mother talking on the phone; she says she cannot go on pretending and wants him gone.

Goodnight Mommy



Official release poster

Directed by	Matt Sobel
Screenplay by	Kyle Warren
Based on	<i>Goodnight Mommy</i> Written and directed by <u>Veronika Franz</u> <u>Severin Fiala</u> Produced by <u>Ulrich Seidl</u> ^[1]
Produced by	<u>Joshua Astrachan</u> <u>David Kaplan</u> V.J. Guibal Nicolas Brigaud-Robert
Starring	<u>Naomi Watts</u> Cameron Crovetti Nicholas Crovetti <u>Peter Hermann</u> Crystal Lucas-Perry <u>Jeremy Bobb</u>

After seeing an old photograph of Mother with green eyes, the boys question whether the woman they are living with, who has blue eyes, is really their mother. When they try to call their father, Mother breaks their shared cell phone. One night while she is taking a bath, Elias tries to remove the skincare face mask she is wearing; an argument ensues and, after Elias tells her she is not their mother, she slaps him, then sprays him with freezing cold shower water until he admits he is wrong.

Terrified, the boys leave in the middle of the night. They try to seek help at a nearby house, but it is abandoned. They break in to spend the night, but two local state troopers find them and return them to Mother. Mother, who has now removed her bandage, insists they are imagining things and tells police that Elias injured his lip from slipping near the pool.

Cinematography	Alexander Dynan
Edited by	Michael Taylor Maya Maffioli
Music by	Alex Weston
Production companies	Playtime Animal Kingdom Big Indie Pictures
Distributed by	<u>Amazon Studios</u>
Release date	September 16, 2022
Running time	92 minutes ^[2]
Country	United States
Language	English

Next morning, Mother wakes to find herself tied to the bed with duct tape. She demands to be let free, claiming she wore green contact lenses as an actress, and they are downstairs in her purse. Lukas tells Elias he searched the purse and did not find them. Elias feels uneasy about leaving Mother tied up and in pain, but Lukas persuades him they must escape. While they are waiting for a taxi nearby, Elias pretends he forgot to pack his toothbrush and returns to the house, where he looks in Mother's purse and finds the contact lenses. Lukas appears and begs Elias to let him explain. Elias flees to the bedroom to free Mother while Lukas disappears.

Mother takes Elias to the barn and shows him a bullet hole in a wall that is covered in blood. Upon seeing it, Elias breaks down; it is revealed Elias accidentally shot and killed Lukas, meaning Lukas has been a hallucination. Lukas' death sent Mother into a grief-stricken depression, which resulted in her divorce and her estrangement from Elias. Mother attempts to console Elias, but in a confused rage, he lashes out and pushes Mother from the barn loft; her lantern smashes, setting the barn on fire. Elias flees and tearfully watches the barn burn to the ground. Mother and Lukas appear at his side. With a smile, Mother tells him he has done nothing wrong, and they embrace.

Cast

- Naomi Watts as Mother
- Cameron Crovetti as Elias
- Nicholas Crovetti as Lukas
- Peter Hermann as Father
- Crystal Lucas-Perry as Sandy
- Jeremy Bobb as Gary

Production

In April 2021, *Variety* announced that Playtime had purchased the rights for a remake to the 2014 Austrian film, *Goodnight Mommy*, which was being developed with Amazon Studios and Animal Kingdom, with Matt Sobel directing, Kyle Warren writing, and Naomi Watts set to star and executive produce (alongside

original writers/directors Veronika Franz and Severin Fiala).^[3] In June that same year, Cameron and Nicholas Crovetti were added to the cast including Jeremy Bobb, Crystal Lucas-Perry, and Peter Hermann.^[4]

In August 2022, it was announced that Alex Weston had composed the score for the film.^[5]

Release

Goodnight Mommy was released in the United States on September 16, 2022, on Prime Video by Amazon Studios.^{[6][7][8]}

Critical reception

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 37% of 68 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.1/10. The website's consensus reads: "Naomi Watts is as talented as ever, but this *Goodnight Mommy* remake has no real reason to exist."^[9] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 45 out of 100, based on 17 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[10]

Benjamin Lee of The Guardian gave the film 2/5 stars, writing: "Without the fine, frightening direction of aunt-nephew duo Veronika Fran and Severin Fiala, we're left with very little, a slick but soulless little movie that should appease neither fans of the original nor newcomers."^[11] Peter Sobczynski of RogerEbert.com gave the film 1/4 stars, saying that it "replicates the basic story beats of the original but leaves out all of the tension, ambiguity, and nasty invention that made that earlier effort so effective in the first place."^[12] Murtada Elfadi of The A.V. Club wrote: "The original Austrian film had shock value and genuine, gruesome horror. This new Americanized version sands the edges off of the narrative every chance it gets", and gave it a grade of C−.^[13]

Christian Zilko of IndieWire gave the film a grade of B−, writing that it "never tries to reinvent the wheel, but while it lacks the potency of the original film, it manages to keep horror lovers entertained without ever embarrassing itself."^[14] Paul Byrnes of The Sydney Morning Herald gave the film 3/5 stars, writing: "I can't say it's better or worse than the original. It's effectively chilling, rather than terrifying. Why Sobel needed to remake it is a mystery."^[15] Noel Murray of the Los Angeles Times praised Watts's performance, but added that the film "pulls back too much from the violence and torture that made the original such a sublime ordeal."^[16]

See also

- Dissociative disorder (DD)
- Fugue state
- Self-deception

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External links

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 - *Goodnight Mommy* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9000184/>) at IMDb
 - *Goodnight Mommy* (<https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v732947>) at AllMovie
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