

# Animal Crackers (2017 film)

***Animal Crackers*** is a 2017 animated comedy-fantasy film directed by Scott Christian Sava and Tony Bancroft, written by Sava and Dean Lorey and based on the animal-shaped cookie (and also loosely on the graphic novel by Sava).<sup>[4]</sup> The film stars the voices of Emily Blunt, John Krasinski, Danny DeVito, Ian McKellen, Sylvester Stallone, Patrick Warburton, Raven-Symoné, Harvey Fierstein, Wallace Shawn, Gilbert Gottfried, Tara Strong, James Arnold Taylor, Kevin Grevioux and Lydia Rose Taylor in her film debut. It tells the story of a family who comes across a box of magical animal crackers that turns anyone that consumes a cracker into the animal that the cracker represents and this animal handily saves the circus that the family was associated with.

The film premiered at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival on June 12, 2017. It was released in China on July 21, 2018.<sup>[3]</sup> It was released on Netflix on July 24, 2020, to mixed-to-positive reviews from critics.<sup>[5]</sup>

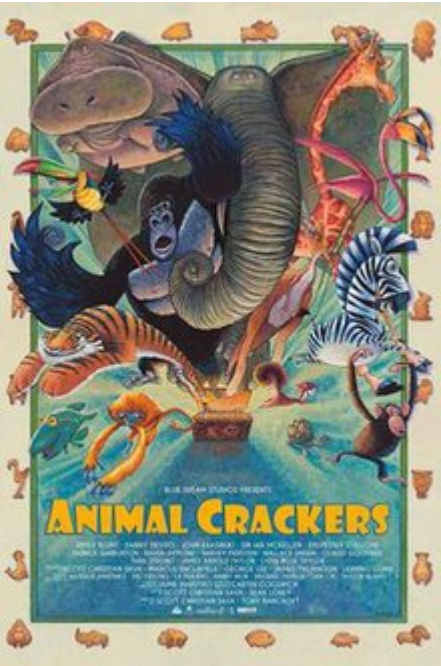
## Plot

In 1962, brothers "Buffalo" Bob and Horatio Huntington run a traveling circus together, doing well in spite of their vastly different personalities. After a show, the circus' resident gypsy fortune teller Esmerelda presents her beautiful niece Talia to her employers, asking them to give her a job. Bob and Horatio are both immediately smitten with the lovely woman, but her affections are solely for Bob.

When the pair announce their plans to marry in 1964, Horatio becomes furious and delivers an ultimatum to his brother to choose either him or Talia. Bob marries Talia and Esmerelda gives them a mysterious box as a wedding gift, which allows them to open a new circus. Buffalo Bob's Rootin' Tootin' Animal Circus, known for animals performing amazing and seemingly impossible feats.

Years later, Bob's nephew Owen marries his childhood friend Zoe at the circus where they had first met as kids. Following the initial excitement however, Owen soon discovers he now has to work as a taste tester for Zoe's father Mr. Woodley at his dog biscuit factory. His co-worker Binkley is trying to create a new type of dog biscuit which keeps getting ruined by Mr. Woodley's personal assistant Brock.

### Animal Crackers



Theatrical release poster designed by Sava

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Scott Christian Sava</u> <div><u>Tony Bancroft</u></div>
<b>Written by</b>	<u>Scott Christian Sava</u> <div><u>Dean Lorey</u></div>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Scott Christian Sava</u> <div><u>George Lee</u><div><u>Marcus Englefield</u><div><u>Jamie Thomason</u><div><u>Leiming Guan</u><div><u>Jaime Maestro</u><div><u>Nathalie Martinez</u><div><u>Ty Accornero</u></div></div></div></div></div></div></div>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Emily Blunt</u> <div><u>John Krasinski</u><div><u>Danny DeVito</u></div></div>

A few years later, Horatio, whose luck has taken a serious downturn since his fight and split with Bob, sneaks into Bob and Talia's dressing rooms, trying to find the secret to the magic animals, and accidentally starts a fire which apparently kills Bob and Talia. Their funeral is attended by Owen, Zoe, and their daughter Mackenzie. Horatio makes an unexpected visit and announces that he'll be taking over the circus. Huntington and his henchmen Mario Zucchini, Samson, Stabby, and El Diablo start a fight, causing the Huntingtons to leave.

Before they leave, circus pets Old Blue and Zena give the Huntingtons the mysterious box, they later discover it holds animal crackers. Owen eats one and turns into a hamster. The Huntingtons return to the circus to figure out how this happened. They learn from the clown Chesterfield that the animal crackers will turn the user into the animal they eat, but it contains only one human cookie to change them back. Later, he tells them they inherited the circus. Zoe is excited, but Owen, determined to please Mr. Woodley, decides to continue his job. Zoe restores the circus while Owen stays at the dog biscuit factory. Frustrated that Zoe quit her job, Mr. Woodley begins to consider Brock as her replacement.

Buffalo Bob's Rootin' Tootin' Animal Circus reopens, but is a disaster upon the discovery of no animals. Owen reluctantly decides to eat the animal crackers and performs stunts as an animal. By the end of the day, Owen grows to like it and decides to quit his job. As his finishes packing up though, Brock unwittingly eats one of the cookies and turns into a mandrill. To catch up with him, Owen turns into a lion, but Brock gets captured by Mario Zucchini, who also steals cookie pieces. Upon returning home, Owen soon discovers he has lost the human cookie and will remain an animal forever. He attempts to adapt to life as a different animal, but has little success. Binkley discovers the animal crackers and aggressively persuades Mr. Woodley to attend the circus.

At one performance, Horatio appears and offers Owen's gorilla form his human cookie (which Mario had also unknowingly stolen) in exchange for the circus. Owen refuses, thinking that remaining an animal will at least keep his family together, but he is forced into the deal by Horatio's hybridized henchmen as they help Horatio force-feed him the human cookie. The circus performers then come across the scene and a fight breaks out, with some of them assuming animal forms to fight.

As his henchmen are defeated, Horatio eats some crackers and turns into a six-limbed chimera. He then is confronted by Old Blue and Zena who reveal themselves as Bob and Talia, alive but forever trapped in animal form due to the destruction of their

	<a href="#">Ian McKellen</a> <a href="#">Sylvester Stallone</a> <a href="#">Patrick Warburton</a> <a href="#">Raven-Symoné</a> <a href="#">Harvey Fierstein</a> <a href="#">Wallace Shawn</a> <a href="#">Gilbert Gottfried</a> <a href="#">Tara Strong</a> <a href="#">James Arnold Taylor</a> <a href="#">Kevin Grevioux</a> Lydia Rose Taylor
<b>Edited by</b>	Ximo Romero
<b>Music by</b>	<a href="#">Bear McCreary</a> <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Production companies</b>	Blue Dream Studios Storyoscopic Films Odin's Eye Animation Mayday Movie Productions Beijing Wen Hua Dongrun Investment Co. <a href="#">China Film Group Corporation</a>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<a href="#">Netflix</a>
<b>Release dates</b>	June 12, 2017 ( <a href="#">Anney</a> ) July 21, 2018 (China) July 24, 2020 (United States)
<b>Running time</b>	105 minutes
<b>Countries</b>	United States Spain China
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$17 million <sup>[2]</sup>

human cookies in the fire. They ask Horatio to redeem himself, but he refuses despite being horrified with what happened. Horatio flies up while grasping them. Owen uses Bullet Man in his rhinoceros form to shoot down Horatio as he, Horatio and Bob land in the net while Mackenzie turns into a Golden snub-nosed monkey to save Talia. Afterwards, Owen, Zoe, and Mackenzie, and the circus performers work together to subdue Horatio. As Horatio vows to have his revenge, Owen turns him into a hamster as Bullet Man quotes In Memoriam A.H.H. from Alfred Lord Tennyson.

<b>Box office</b>	\$14 million <sup>[3]</sup>
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As the circus performers, Zoe, and Mackenzie regain their human forms, Chesterfield gleefully tells the caged henchmen that their human cookies are broken as a side-effect of eating the broken pieces and it will take him awhile to figure out whose parts go to whom. Mario subsequently tells Chesterfield to take his time with the others in agreement. Horatio demands to be released from his hamster cage to no avail as he starts running on a hamster wheel.

Having witnessed the performance and Brock still being in mandrill form, Mr. Woodley reevaluates his views on both Owen and the circus. With Binkley, he decides to create a new circus souvenir using her failed experiments. By the next show, they have made animal crackers that cause the eater's skin to temporarily take on the color and patterns of the animal whose cracker they eat. Owen consumes a new animal cracker that just appeared in the box and takes the stage as a dragon.

## Cast

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- John Krasinski as Owen Huntington, MacKenzie's father, Zoe's husband, Talia's step-nephew, Horatio and Buffalo Bob's nephew and the circus owner.<sup>[6]</sup>
  - Brendan Sava portrays young Owen.<sup>[7]</sup>
- Emily Blunt as Zoe Huntington, MacKenzie's mother, Owen's wife, Talia's stepniece-in-law, Horatio and Buffalo Bob's niece-in-law.<sup>[6][8]</sup>
  - Noelle Ellison Thomason portrays young Zoe.
- Danny DeVito as Chesterfield, the circus's funniest clown who had gotten fat from the foods that he ate.<sup>[9][10]</sup>
- Ian McKellen as Horatio P. Huntington, Buffalo Bob's older brother, Owen's uncle, Zoe's uncle-in-law, and Mackenzie's great uncle who was envious of his brother's success. He hates it when Zucchini calls him his "henchman" and keeps correcting him because he is his master, not his henchman. Horatio's chimera form has the head of a white-maned lion, the horns of a Bighorn sheep, the wings of a dragon, the tail, limbs and body of a crocodilian, with two of them being humanoid in appearance.<sup>[9][11]</sup>
- Sylvester Stallone as Bulletman, the human cannonball in a bullet-shaped helmet who only says his name until the end of the movie.<sup>[9]</sup>
- Patrick Warburton as Brock, a big strong personal assistant of Mr. Woodley who likes to pick on Owen and Binkley.<sup>[9]</sup>
- Raven-Symoné as Binkley, Zoe's childhood friend and Owen's co-worker who works to make the type of dog biscuit to impress Mr. Woodley.<sup>[9][12]</sup>
- Wallace Shawn as Mr. Woodley,<sup>[13]</sup> Zoe's father, Mackenzie's grandpa, and Owen's father-in-law who runs a dog biscuit factory. He originally didn't like that Owen was Zoe's husband and kept calling Owen a "deadly man", but later accepted it later in the film.
- Harvey Fierstein as Esmeralda, a Rom fortune teller who is Talia's aunt and is the one who gave Bob the magical animal crackers that she got from Tibet.<sup>[9][14]</sup>

- Gilbert Gottfried as Mario Zucchini, a dwarf motorcycle rider who thinks Horatio is his minion, which is actually the other way around as Horatio keeps correcting him. When Mario ate the broken pieces of the animal crackers, he sported the head and paws of a snowshoe hare and the shell and back legs of a tortoise while maintaining his hair, jacket, and pants.<sup>[9][15]</sup>
- Tara Strong as Talia, Esmeralda's niece, Buffalo Bob's girlfriend, later wife, Owen's step-aunt, Zoe's step-aunt-in-law and Mackenzie's great step-aunt who is trapped in the form of a cat named Zena. She speaks with a soft Italian accent.<sup>[9][16]</sup>
- James Arnold Taylor as Buffalo Bob, Talia's husband, Horatio's younger brother and Owen's uncle/former owner of the circus, Zoe's uncle-in-law and Mackenzie's great uncle who is trapped in the form of a bloodhound named Old Blue.<sup>[9][17]</sup>
- Kevin Grevioux as Samson, a strongman with a beard and no hair who is one of Horatio's henchmen. When Samson ate the broken pieces of the animal crackers, he sported the head of a Texas Longhorn and the arms of a gorilla while maintaining his torso and legs giving him an appearance that is similar to the minotaur.<sup>[18]</sup>
- Lydia Rose Taylor as Mackenzie Huntington, Owen and Zoe's daughter, Mr. Woodley's granddaughter, Talia's great step-niece, Buffalo Bob and Horatio's great niece.<sup>[9][19]</sup>
- Tony Bancroft as Stabby (uncredited in the Netflix release), a knife thrower and one of Horatio's henchmen. When Stabby ate the broken pieces of the animal crackers, he sported the head, stomach, and tail of a Saltwater crocodile and the torso and paws of a Siberian tiger while maintaining his hair, goatee, and boots.
- Anthony Sava as El Diablo, a fire breather in a devil-like outfit and one of Horatio's henchmen. When El Diablo ate the broken pieces of the animal crackers, he sported the head of a frog and the wings of a bat in place of his arms while maintaining his outfit.
- Donna Lynne Sava as Petunia (uncredited in the Netflix release), a fat lady that Mario would be aroused by.
- Alyssa Trama as Gretchen, a former bearded lady who underwent electrolysis that Bob and Talia paid for.
- Noelle Ellis Thomas as Girl in Crowd (uncredited in the Netflix release)
- Logan Sava as Kid in Crowd (uncredited in the Netflix release)
- Kim Sava as Mom in Crowd

Additional voices by Cam Clarke, Lara Cody, Debi Derryberry, Jessica Gee, Grant George, Max Koch, Brianne Siddall, and Jennie Yee

## Production

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### Development and writing

In 2011, Scott Christian Sava wrote a comic book for *Animal Crackers* but was unable to garner any interest. In June 2013, Harvey Weinstein had seen a short film of the screenplay made by Sava<sup>[20]</sup> and two months later the Weinstein brothers made an offer to buy the rights to *Animal Crackers*.<sup>[21]</sup> Sava co-directed the movie with Tony Bancroft and co-wrote the screenplay with Dean Lorey.<sup>[21]</sup>

Financing the movie were executive producers Mu Yedong on behalf of Wen Hua Dongrun Investment Co., La Peikang, board chairman of China Film Co., and Sam Chi for Landmark Asia.<sup>[22]</sup>

*Despicable Me* character designer, Carter Goodrich, was hired in October 2014.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Pre-production

The voice cast was completed by casting director Jamie Thomason who also serves as the voice director.<sup>[9]</sup>

In the last week of October and throughout November, 2014, Sava via the *Animal Crackers* [Facebook](#) page, there were sneak peeks to the look of some characters along with announcing the voice cast for those characters [Kevin Grevioux](#) as Samson the Strong Man,<sup>[18]</sup> [James Arnold Taylor](#) as Buffalo Bob,<sup>[17]</sup> [Tara Strong](#) as Talia,<sup>[16]</sup> [Harvey Fierstein](#) as Esmerelda the Fortune Teller,<sup>[14]</sup> [Gilbert Gottfried](#) as Mario Zucchini,<sup>[15]</sup> and [Raven-Symoné](#) as Binkley.<sup>[12]</sup>

On November 6, 2014, Blue Dream Studios announced [Sylvester Stallone](#), [Danny DeVito](#), and [Ian McKellen](#) as lead voice cast.<sup>[9]</sup> On February 3, 2015, [John Krasinski](#) and [Kaley Cuoco](#) joined the cast as Owen and Zoe Huntington, respectively.<sup>[6]</sup> On March 30, 2015, [Emily Blunt](#) replaced Cuoco due to a scheduling conflict.<sup>[8]</sup>

"When I was writing *Animal Crackers* I had specific voices in my head. Certain characters I wrote with actors in mind. Horatio was always Sir Ian McKellen. Brock was totally [Patrick Warburton](#). Bullet-Man could be no one else but Stallone! To find out that each and every one of these actors have agreed to come on board this film and bring these characters to life... I'm flipping out," said Sava.<sup>[9]</sup>

It was announced via Sava's Facebook page that his son, Brendan, would play 12-year-old Owen Huntington and his wife, Donna, would play the Fat Lady. On May 22, 2015, it was revealed that [Wallace Shawn](#) had been cast as Mr. Woodley, Zoe's (Blunt) father.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Animation

The film's animation is created on [Autodesk Maya](#), and rendered on [Arnold](#), in an effort to save costs, it was produced in Blue Dream Studios Spain an 5,000-square foot house [Valencia](#) that the director Sava founded In early 2014, more than 120 animators worked on the film.

## Filming

On January 27, 2015, Sava announced on [Facebook](#) via the *Animal Crackers* page that first day of "studio sessions with the actors" began in Los Angeles.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Music

The film's original score was composed by [Bear McCreary](#),<sup>[1]</sup> and its soundtrack includes original songs by [Toad the Wet Sprocket](#), [Huey Lewis and the News](#), [Howard Jones](#), and [Michael Bublé](#).<sup>[24]</sup>

## Soundtrack

### Track listing

No.	Title	Music	Length
1.	"Welcome" (John Adair version)	<a href="#">Ian McKellen</a>	2:08

***Animal Crackers: Original  
Motion Picture  
Soundtrack***

2.	"While We're Young"	<u>Huey Lewis and the News</u>	3:40
3.	"Like That"	<u>Fleur East</u>	3:08
4.	"The Tractor"	<u>Chris McDougall, Leslie Austin, Dayan Kai</u>	2:39
5.	"Master of the Ring"	<u>Connor Clark</u>	2:50
6.	"Could've Been Mine"	<u>Ian McKellen, Gilbert Gottfried</u>	2:09
7.	"We're in This Together"	<u>Howard Jones</u>	4:52
8.	"Don't Stop Me Now" (2011 remaster)	<u>Queen</u>	3:12
9.	"One of Those Days"	<u>Toad the Wet Sprocket</u>	2:42
10.	"Today (Is Yesterday's Tomorrow)"	<u>Michael Bublé</u>	3:22
11.	"Lost and Found"	<u>Katie Herzig</u>	4:43
12.	"Animal Crackers Overture"	<u>Bear McCreary</u>	5:22
13.	"Papa Bear"	<u>Bear McCreary</u>	2:57
14.	"Showtime"	<u>Bear McCreary</u>	2:23
<b>Total length:</b>			<b>46:25</b>

<b><u>Soundtrack album</u> by Various artists</b>	
<b>Released</b>	July 17, 2020
<b>Recorded</b>	2015-2016
<b>Genre</b>	<u>Film soundtrack</u>
<b>Length</b>	46:25
<b>Label</b>	<u>Sony Masterworks</u>

## Score

All tracks written and composed by Bear McCreary.

### Track listing

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Length</b>
1.	"Animal Crackers Overture" (Extended Version)	5:51
2.	"The Huntington Brothers"	3:28
3.	"Life at the Circus"	3:59
4.	"The Dog Food Factory"	4:54
5.	"News of the Fire"	1:45
6.	"Circus Memorial"	3:58
7.	"Holy Moly"	2:35
8.	"Zucchini Chase"	4:16
9.	"Little Cookie Me"	3:22
10.	"The Magic Is Gone"	3:01
11.	"Brock and Woodley"	3:43
12.	"Papa Bear" (Extended Version)	3:13
13.	"A Helping Hoof"	1:58
14.	"The Tiger"	3:14
15.	"Monkeying Around"	3:58
16.	"An Offer From Horatio"	3:40
17.	"Freak Fight"	3:54
18.	"Chimera"	5:57
19.	"Showtime" (Extended Version)	6:40
<b>Total length:</b>		<b>1:12:58</b>

### Bonus tracks

<b><i>Animal Crackers: Original Motion Picture Score</i></b>	
<b><u>Film score</u> by <u>Bear McCreary</u></b>	
<b>Released</b>	July 17, 2020
<b>Recorded</b>	2017
<b>Genre</b>	<u>Score</u>
<b>Length</b>	1:14:03
<b>Label</b>	<u>Sony Classical</u>
<b><u>Bear McCreary</u> chronology</b>	
<u><i>Fantasy Island: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack</i></u> (2020)	<u><i>Animal Crackers: Original Motion Picture Score</i></u> (2020)

No.	Title	Length
20.	"Fanfare for Bulletman"	0:45
21.	"Blue Dream Studios Logo"	0:20
		<b>Total length: 1:14:03</b>

## Release

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### Theatrical

The film had its world premiere in competition at the [Annecy International Animated Film Festival](#) on June 12, 2017.<sup>[25][26]</sup> The film was originally set to be released on April 28, 2017 by [Relativity Media](#), however, a financial crisis within the company prevented them from releasing the film. It was then set to be released on September 1, 2017 by upstart film studio Serafini Releasing before they also shut down.<sup>[27]</sup> A few months later, in November 2017, it was announced that [Entertainment Studios](#) would distribute the film worldwide. In April, Sava posted on Facebook that the film was set for a release date of August 10, 2018.<sup>[28]</sup> The deal with Entertainment Studios was dropped in June 2018.<sup>[29]</sup>

Eventually, the distribution rights were bought by [Netflix](#) and the film was released on July 24, 2020 on the platform.<sup>[30][5]</sup> It was the second-most streamed film on its opening weekend.<sup>[31]</sup>

### Home media

The film was released on digital and on-demand on April 18, 2023 by [Lionsgate](#) and [Gravitas Ventures](#).<sup>[32]</sup> Allied Vaughn would later release the film on DVD and Blu-Ray on October 3, 2023.<sup>[33]</sup> These releases were not authenticated or approved by director Scott Christian Sava, and are presumed to be licensed through investor Mayday Productions or another unknown outside entity.<sup>[34]</sup>

## Reception

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### Critical response

On the [review aggregator](#) website [Rotten Tomatoes](#), the film holds an approval rating of 64% based on 22 reviews, with an average rating of 6.00/10. It had a critical consensus which read: "*Animal Crackers* is far from the most distinctive animated fare, but its wacky humor and zippy speed make it a decent diversion for younger viewers."<sup>[35]</sup> On [Metacritic](#), the film has a [weighted average](#) score of 60 out of 100 based on 5 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".<sup>[36]</sup>

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  - *Animal Crackers* ([https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/animal\\_crackers\\_2016](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/animal_crackers_2016)) at Rotten Tomatoes
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