

The Devil All the Time (film)

The Devil All the Time is a 2020 American Southern Gothic psychological crime thriller film directed by Antonio Campos, from a screenplay co-written with his brother Paulo, based on the novel of the same name by Donald Ray Pollock (who also serves as the film's narrator). The film follows several characters whose stories weave together in two Southern Ohio towns during the period from the end of World War II to the 1960s. It features an ensemble cast that includes Tom Holland, Bill Skarsgård, Sebastian Stan, Robert Pattinson, Riley Keough, Haley Bennett, Eliza Scanlen, Mia Wasikowska, and Jason Clarke.

The Devil All the Time was released in select theaters on September 11, 2020, and on Netflix on September 16, 2020. It received polarizing reviews from critics, who praised the performances (particularly Holland and Pattinson) but were critical of the film's length and dark tone.

Plot

During World War II, while serving in the Solomon Islands, U.S. Marine Willard Russell finds Gunnery Sergeant Miller Jones skinned and crucified by Japanese soldiers. Willard ends Jones's agony by shooting him with a nearby Luger pistol. After the war, on his way home to Coal Creek, West Virginia, Willard passes through Meade, Ohio, where he meets Charlotte, a waitress at a diner, and a photographer named Carl Henderson. Willard and Charlotte marry and move to Knockemstiff, Ohio, where they have a son, whom they name Arvin.

In 1950, Helen Hatton—whom Willard's mother, Emma, wanted him to marry—marries Roy Laferty. Roy is a bizarre, albeit charismatic, evangelical preacher who pours venomous spiders over his head while giving sermons to demonstrate his faith in God. Helen and Roy have a daughter named Lenora. During a sermon, Roy is bitten by a spider on his face and has a severe allergic reaction that affects his grip on reality, coming to believe that he can resurrect the dead. After Helen drops off Lenora at Emma's home, Roy takes Helen out to the woods and stabs her in the neck with a screwdriver. He then tries and fails to resurrect her. A distraught Roy hitchhikes and is picked

The Devil All the Time



Promotional release poster

Directed by	<u>Antonio Campos</u>
Screenplay by	<u>Antonio Campos</u> <u>Paulo Campos</u>
Based on	<i><u>The Devil All the Time</u></i> by <u>Donald Ray Pollock</u>
Produced by	<u>Jake Gyllenhaal</u> <u>Riva Marker</u> <u>Randall Poster</u> <u>Max Born</u>
Starring	<u>Tom Holland</u> <u>Bill Skarsgård</u> <u>Riley Keough</u> <u>Jason Clarke</u> <u>Sebastian Stan</u> <u>Haley Bennett</u> <u>Eliza Scanlen</u> <u>Mia Wasikowska</u>

up by photographer Carl Henderson and his wife Sandy, who met at the same time and place Willard and Charlotte did. Carl and Sandy are revealed to be serial killers who pick up male hitchhikers, encourage them to have sex with Sandy while Carl takes photographs, then murder them. Roy refuses to have sex with Sandy, but Carl kills him anyway.

In 1957, Charlotte is diagnosed with cancer. Willard believes he can influence God with fervent prayer to remove the cancer from his wife's body. He prays to God and sacrifices Arvin's dog on a rustic cross he had erected in the woods behind his house. Charlotte dies despite his efforts and Willard commits suicide by slitting his throat. His death is investigated by Sandy's brother, corrupt Sheriff Lee Bodecker. Now orphaned, Arvin goes to live with his grandmother Emma, who has also adopted Lenora.

In 1965, Arvin—now a young adult working manual jobs around town—is given Willard's Luger as a birthday present. He is fiercely protective of high school-aged Lenora, who is bullied by some local greasers. One day, their harassment pushes Arvin to attack them mercilessly. Lenora grows close to the new, self-righteous Reverend Preston Teagardin, whom Arvin resents for previously ridiculing Emma. The ephebophilic Preston grooms Lenora and she becomes pregnant. When she informs Preston, he rejects her. Overwhelmed by the bullying and her pregnancy, Lenora hangs herself, though she briefly reconsiders during the process. After the autopsy, Arvin is told that she was pregnant and deduces that Preston was the father. He follows Preston and sees him grooming another girl.

When they are alone at church together, Arvin confronts Preston about Lenora. He then shoots and kills Preston with the Luger before fleeing. Arvin decides to hitchhike to his childhood home in Knockemstiff and is picked up by Carl and Sandy, whose relationship has become acrimonious. Realizing their intentions, Arvin kills them both in self-defense. He finds evidence of their serial killings and takes some of it with him. When Lee finds out that Carl and Sandy were murdered, he goes to their apartment and burns Carl's photo collection to protect himself and his coming re-election.

While investigating their deaths, Lee concludes that Arvin was responsible. He tracks him to Willard's cross where Arvin has gone to bury his dog. Seeking revenge, Lee attempts to kill him with a shotgun. A shootout ensues and Arvin shoots Lee in the stomach. As the sheriff dies, Arvin plants the evidence of Carl and Sandy's killing spree on his body so that their crimes will be revealed.

As Preston's death is also uncovered, Arvin hitchhikes out of the area with a hippie headed to Cincinnati. As they drive off, Arvin falls asleep and contemplates his future, which he imagines will be very similar to Willard's.

	<u>Robert Pattinson</u>
Narrated by	Donald Ray Pollock
Cinematography	<u>Lol Crawley</u>
Edited by	Sofia Subercaseaux
Music by	Danny Bensi Saunder Jurriaans
Production companies	<u>Nine Stories Productions</u> Bronx Moving Company
Distributed by	<u>Netflix</u>
Release date	September 11, 2020
Running time	138 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English

Cast

- Tom Holland as Arvin Russell
 - Michael Banks Repeta as Young Arvin
- Bill Skarsgård as Willard Russell, Arvin's father

- [Riley Keough](#) as Sandy Henderson, Lee's sister
- [Jason Clarke](#) as Carl Henderson, Sandy's husband
- [Sebastian Stan](#) as Deputy Lee Bodecker, Sandy's brother
- [Haley Bennett](#) as Charlotte Russell, Arvin's mother
- [Harry Melling](#) as Roy Laferty, Lenora's father
- [Eliza Scanlen](#) as Lenora Laferty
- [Mia Wasikowska](#) as Helen Hatton, Lenora's mother
- [Robert Pattinson](#) as Rev. Preston Teagardin
- [Douglas Hodge](#) as Leroy Brown
- [Kristin Griffith](#) as Emma Russell, Willard's mother and Lenora's adoptive mother
- [Pokey LaFarge](#) as Theodore, Roy's cousin

In addition, narration throughout the film is performed by [Donald Ray Pollock](#), the author of the novel.

Production

Production for *The Devil All the Time* was announced in September 2018, with [Tom Holland](#), [Robert Pattinson](#), [Chris Evans](#) and [Mia Wasikowska](#) in talks to star. [Antonio Campos](#) was set to write and direct the film, with [Jake Gyllenhaal](#) serving as producer. In January 2019, [Bill Skarsgård](#) and [Eliza Scanlen](#) joined the cast, and [Netflix](#) was set to distribute the film.^{[1][2]} [Sebastian Stan](#) was cast to replace Evans, after scheduling conflicts caused him to drop out and personally recommended Stan for the role.^[3] Additionally, [Jason Clarke](#), [Riley Keough](#) and [Haley Bennett](#) were announced as part of the cast,^[4] and in March 2019, [Harry Melling](#) also joined.^[5] [Danny Bensi](#) and [Saunders Jurriaans](#) composed the film's score.^[6]

Principal photography began on February 19, 2019, in [Alabama](#), with filming locations including [Anniston](#), [Pell City](#), [Birmingham](#), and [Montevallo](#).^{[7][8]} Filming completed on April 15, 2019.^{[9][10]}

Visual style

Campos stated that visual inspiration from the film mainly stemmed from the visual descriptions that Pollock provided in the novel itself. "The book kind of offers these amazing moments and images, things like, the prayer log, Carl's photographs in the book," Campos stated, "it gets your mind going." The film's visual style is inspired by painter [Andrew Wyeth](#) and photographer [William Eggleston](#). Campos stated that the scenes that were inspired by Eggleston's work were mainly due to how colorful they were. [Appalachia](#) itself also inspired Campos and company when they were considering the visuals in the film. Campos wanted the film to mirror what Appalachia looked like during the timeline when the story takes place.^[11]

Release

The Devil All the Time was released in select theaters on September 11, 2020,^{[12][13]} and digitally, on Netflix, on September 16, 2020.^[14]

The film was the most-watched on Netflix over its first two days, and third overall in its first five days.^[15] In November 2020, [Variety](#) reported the film was the 22nd-most watched straight-to-streaming title of 2020 up to that point.^[16]

Reception

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 65% of 219 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.4/10. The website's consensus reads: "*The Devil All the Time*'s descent into darkness can be harrowing to the point of punishment, but it's offset by strong work from a stellar cast."^[17] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 55 out of 100, based on 39 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[18]

The Chicago Tribune's Michael Phillips wrote, "It's easy on the eyes... worth seeing for an intriguingly cast ensemble, authenticating the milieu as much as possible. Holland's terrific, taking in each new setback in [his character's] life without revealing the full extent of the damage."^[19]

Ryan Lattanzio of IndieWire gave *The Devil All the Time* a "C-" and called it a "colossal misfire, a sweaty mess from start to finish," although he praised Holland and Pattinson's performances.^[20] Owen Gleiberman of Variety said that "it's hard to imagine how a movie with this much sordid crime and violence could be this rote" and wrote "*The Devil All the Time* shows us a lot of bad behavior, but the movie isn't really interested in what makes the sinners tick. And without that lurid curiosity, it's just a series of Sunday School lessons: a noir that wants to scrub away the darkness."^[21]

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External links

- *The Devil All the Time* (<https://www.netflix.com/title/81028870>) on Netflix
 - *The Devil All the Time* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7395114/>) at IMDb
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