

# Project Power

***Project Power*** is a 2020 American science fiction action film<sup>[3]</sup> directed by Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman, produced by Eric Newman and Bryan Unkeless, and written by Mattson Tomlin. It stars Jamie Foxx, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, and Dominique Fishback, alongside Colson Baker, Rodrigo Santoro, Amy Landecker and Allen Maldonado, and follows a drug dealer, a police officer, and a former soldier who team up to stop the distribution of a pill that gives the user superpowers for five minutes.

The film was released on August 14, 2020, by Netflix. It received mixed-to-positive reviews from critics, who praised the performances of the cast, action sequences and visuals but criticized the screenplay.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Plot

In near-future New Orleans, a mysterious distributor offers a free supply of "Power"—a pill that grants various superpowers for five minutes—to a group of drug dealers, including one named Newt.

Six weeks later, Newt's teenage cousin Robin, a dealer herself, is nearly robbed by customers seeking Power. She is rescued by NOPD Officer Frank Shaver, one of her regular buyers. Art, a man hunting for the distributor "Biggie", tracks down Newt, who dies after a struggle when he overdoses on Power. Frank foils a bank robbery by a Power-enhanced thief, but is suspended for using Power himself. His captain reveals that government personnel are pressuring him to terminate any investigation into Power, and gives Frank a picture of the man they suspect to be the source of the drug: Art.

Using Newt's phone to find and abduct Robin, Art forces her to take him to the drug cartel's safehouse. He is shot while eliminating several of the cartel's men, and discovers that Power users throughout New Orleans are being monitored as test subjects for the drug. Art bonds with Robin as they treat his wounds, and reveals that after leaving the military, he was recruited by Teleios, a private defense contractor who experimented on him to create superpowers. His daughter Tracy, born after the experiments, exhibited powers without ever taking the drug, and was abducted by Wallace, a Teleios operative.

### Project Power



Promotional release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Henry Joost</u>
	<u>Ariel Schulman</u>
<b>Written by</b>	<u>Mattson Tomlin</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Eric Newman</u>
	<u>Bryan Unkeless</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Jamie Foxx</u>
	<u>Joseph Gordon-Levitt</u>
	<u>Dominique Fishback</u>
	<u>Rodrigo Santoro</u>
	<u>Colson Baker</u>
	<u>Allen Maldonado</u>
	<u>Amy Landecker</u>
	<u>Courtney B. Vance</u>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<u>Michael Simmonds</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Jeff McEvoy</u>

Art and Robin find Biggie hosting a private demonstration of Project Power for a potential buyer near the Superdome, where large groups of Saints fans are arriving for a home game. Biggie claims that Power represents "the next evolution of the human species", with the pill's powers derived from the abilities of animals, such as the chameleon or the wolverine frog. Art interrogates Biggie at gunpoint and learns of a ship, the *Genesis*, but Frank intervenes, having tracked other users to the demonstration. Biggie takes a dose of Power, forcing Art, Robin, and Frank to flee as Art kills Biggie in an explosion.

Frank arrests Art and informs his captain, but Art explains that the Power epidemic in New Orleans is mass testing to stabilize the drug, and that Tracy is the source of the drug's powers. Having convinced Frank that his captain is actually taking orders from Teleios, Art purposely has himself captured by Teleios and taken aboard the *Genesis*. Frank and Robin infiltrate the ship, and Art persuades a guard to free him. Frank and Art kill Wallace, while Robin finds Tracy and reunites her with her father.

As the four attempt to flee, Robin is captured by Dr. Gardner, the head of Project Power, who demands Tracy in exchange for Robin's life. Art confronts Gardner, using Power, which gives him the ability of a pistol shrimp to finally kill Gardner and her men. Despite this costing Art his life, Tracy ultimately resurrects him with her powers. They all escape the ship.

Frank intends to expose Project Power to the press, while Art decides to move on. He gives Robin his truck and a bag full of money to cover her mother's medical needs, telling her to use the greatness inside of her. Art and Tracy depart, finally free. Meanwhile, Robin begins a new career as a rapper.

<b>Music by</b>	<u>Joseph Trapanese</u>
<b>Production companies</b>	Screen Arcade Supermarche
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Netflix</u>
<b>Release date</b>	August 14, 2020
<b>Running time</b>	114 minutes <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$85.1 million <sup>[2]</sup>

## Cast

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- Jamie Foxx as Art; a U.S. Army Major and Delta Force operator who was one of Power's original test subjects; he possesses the ability inherited from a pistol shrimp, thus being able to launch powerful heatwaves from his body.
- Joseph Gordon-Levitt as Frank Shaver; a NOPD detective. He receives Power that hardens his skin, effectively making him bulletproof. This ability is probably inherited from an armadillo and does not give invulnerability, but just lowers the amount of damage received to the point Frank does not receive any serious injuries. His ability also gives him a strength boost.
- Dominique Fishback as Robin Reilly; a street-smart Power dealer who aspires to be a rap artist.
- Colson Baker as Newt Lasalle; Robin's cousin and fellow Power dealer, who possesses the ability to generate fire from his body. The ability is probably related to the Bombardier Beetle who is able to produce secretions of over 200 degrees F. Like with the beetle, Newt's ability only offers him limited heat resistance, leaving him with serious burns on his body.
- Rodrigo Santoro as Biggie; one of Power's creators, who possesses the ability to rapidly increase in size and strength.
- Amy Landecker as Gardner
- Allen Maldonado as Landry
- Kyanna Simone Simpson as Tracy; Art's daughter who possess the ability to heal organic matter; her powers were inherited from her father and come naturally.

- [Andrene Ward-Hammond](#) as Irene
- [Courtney B. Vance](#) as Captain Crane; Shaver's NOPD commanding officer.
- [Casey Neistat](#) as Moto, Candy's boyfriend.
- [Jim Klock](#) as Mr. Luker
- [Luke Hawx](#) as Bouncer
- [Janet Rose Nguyen](#) as Deli Girl
- [Rose Bianco](#) as the Matriarch
- [Tait Fletcher](#) as Wallace; an employee of Gardner's who possesses the ability of superhuman strength, which he probably inherited from a rhinoceros or a gorilla. Downside is that he receives damage as usual since he does not have an ability to protect his body from taking damage.
- [Yoshi Sudarso](#) as Knifebones; a henchman of Gardner's who possesses the ability of turning his bones into weapons. His power was inherited from a wolverine frog.
- [Jane Chika Oranika](#) as Akeela; Robin's classmate.
- [Jazzy De Lisser](#) as Candy; Moto's girlfriend who was given a pill to test it out. She inherited an ability of thermal regulation, but instead of Newt's immolation, she can lower the temperature of her own body and her surroundings to extremely low temperatures.
- [Cory Demeyers](#) as Griff; a Power user and bank robber, that Frank pursues. He inherited the ability of skin camouflage from an octopus or chameleon.
- [C.J. LeBlanc](#) as Miggs
- [Azhar Khan](#) as Guello; one of the drug dealers standing higher in the chain after Robin. Art asks Robin to go to him to find information of the one who kidnapped his daughter. He inherited an ability of spontaneous regeneration, allowing him to heal with increased speed from a lizard.

## Production

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In October 2017, it was announced that [Netflix](#) had acquired [Mattson Tomlin](#)'s spec script *Power* in a bidding war with several other studios. [Ariel Schulman](#) and [Henry Joost](#) would direct the film, with [Eric Newman](#) and [Bryan Unkeless](#) producing.<sup>[5]</sup> In September 2018, [Jamie Foxx](#), [Joseph Gordon-Levitt](#) and [Dominique Fishback](#) joined the cast of the then-untitled film.<sup>[6][7]</sup> In October 2018, [Rodrigo Santoro](#), [Amy Landecker](#), [Allen Maldonado](#), [Kyanna Simone Simpson](#), [Andrene Ward-Hammond](#), [Machine Gun Kelly](#), and [Casey Neistat](#) joined the cast of the film.<sup>[8][9]</sup> In November 2018, [Jim Klock](#) joined the cast of the film.<sup>[10]</sup> In December 2018, [Courtney B. Vance](#) joined the cast of the film.<sup>[11]</sup> In July 2020, it was announced that the film would officially be titled *Project Power*.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Filming

Principal photography began on October 8, 2018 and concluded on December 22, 2018.<sup>[13][14]</sup> Filming took place in [New Orleans](#).<sup>[15][16]</sup> On October 31, 2018, [Joseph Gordon-Levitt](#) was injured during filming while riding a bicycle.<sup>[16]</sup> The film had a total production budget of \$85.1 million, with \$80.4 million spent on-location in [Louisiana](#).<sup>[2]</sup>

## Reception

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## Viewership

*Project Power* was released by Netflix on August 14, 2020.<sup>[17]</sup> It was the top-streamed film on the platform in its first two weekends before finishing in second place in its third.<sup>[18][19][20]</sup> In October 2020, Netflix reported 75 million households watched the film over its first four weeks of release.<sup>[21]</sup> In November, *Variety* reported the film was the 12th-most watched straight-to-streaming title of 2020 up to that point.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Critical response

On review aggregator *Rotten Tomatoes*, the film holds an approval rating of 61% based on 178 reviews, with an average rating of 5.7/10. The website's critics' consensus reads: "Although it wastes some of the potential of its premise, *Project Power* is a slick, fun action thriller - and features a star-making turn from Dominique Fishback."<sup>[23]</sup> *Metacritic* assigned the film a weighted average score of 51 out of 100, based on 35 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".<sup>[24]</sup>

Writing for *The Hollywood Reporter*, David Rooney said that "what makes *Project Power* entertaining is its canny combination of familiar ingredients in a textured real-world milieu that gives it fresh flavor."<sup>[25]</sup> Kate Erbland of *IndieWire* gave the film a "C+" and said that "*Project Power* wrestles with a litany of thorny moral issues (and not only those of the 'great power, great responsibility' vibe) but never fully engages with them. There's broad strokes about the impact of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans residents, and a paper-thin exploration of the criminal implications of a cop not only using the drug, but buying it off a teenage dealer."<sup>[26]</sup>

## Accolades

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
Visual Effects Society Awards	April 6, 2021	Outstanding Visual Effects in a Photoreal Feature	Ivan Moran, Leslie Hough, Joao Sita, Matthew Twyford, Yves Debono	Nominated	[27]
		Outstanding Effects Simulations in a Photoreal Feature	Yin Lai Jimmy Leung, Jonathan Edward Lyddon-Towl, Pierpaolo Navarini, Michelle Lee	Won	
		Outstanding Compositing in a Photoreal Feature	Russell Horth, Matthew Patience, Julien Rousseau	Won	

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## External links

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- *Project Power* (<https://www.netflix.com/title/80204465>) on Netflix
  - *Project Power* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7550000/>) at IMDb
  - *Project Power* ([https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/project\\_power](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/project_power)) at Rotten Tomatoes
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