

# How It Ends (2021 film)

***How It Ends*** is a 2021 American apocalyptic comedy-drama film written, directed, and produced by Daryl Wein and Zoe Lister-Jones. It stars Lister-Jones and Cailee Spaeny, with cameo appearances by 23 others in a series of vignettes, facilitating the reality of 2020 COVID-19 protocols while serving the underlying plot device of walking through the deserted streets of Los Angeles.

The film had its world premiere at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival on January 29, 2021, and was released in the United States on July 20, 2021, by United Artists Releasing.

## Plot summary

On the last full day before a meteor arrives on its collision course with Earth, Liza takes stock of her life through a conversation with her "metaphysical" childhood self. The conversation carries through as they walk through the empty streets of Los Angeles to their cousin Mandy's End of the World Party. As they walk, they have short interactions with numerous individuals, including the metaphysical YS of others – the Younger Selves who are now visible due to certain doom having elevated everyone's awareness. The Lizas also stop to visit some family, and friends, they want to see before the end.

## Cast

- Zoe Lister-Jones as Liza
  - Cailee Spaeny as Little Liza
- Whitney Cummings as Mandy (Liza's friend)
- Tawny Newsome as Celine (Liza's friend)
- Finn Wolfhard as Ezra (the Lizas' cousin)
- Nick Kroll as Gary (the drug buyer)
- Logan Marshall-Green as Nate (the ex Liza still loves)
- Bobby Lee as Derek (Liza's neighbor)
- Fred Armisen as Manny (YS version)
- Glenn Howerton as John (the car thief)
- Bradley Whitford as Kenny (the Lizas' father)
- Ayo Edebiri as Stand Up (the teacher)
- Sharon Van Etten as Jet (the busker)
- Olivia Wilde as Alay (Liza's long avoided friend)
- Paul W. Downs as Sal (the Lizas' childhood first kiss)

<i>How It Ends</i>	
<span></span> <div>Official poster</div>	
Directed by	<div><u>Daryl Wein</u></div> <div><u>Zoe Lister-Jones</u></div>
Written by	<div>Daryl Wein</div> <div>Zoe Lister-Jones</div>
Produced by	<div>Daryl Wein</div> <div>Zoe Lister-Jones</div>
Starring	<div>Zoe Lister-Jones</div> <div><u>Cailee Spaeny</u></div>
Cinematography	<div>Daryl Wein</div> <div>Tyler Beus</div>
Edited by	<div>Daryl Wein</div> <div>Libby Cuenin</div>
Music by	<u>Ryan Miller</u>
Production company	<div>Mister Lister Films</div>
Distributed by	<div><u>American International Pictures</u> (through</div>

- [Raymond Cham Jr.](#) as Breakdancer
- [Lamorne Morris](#) as Larry (Liza's bad ex)
- [Angelique Cabral](#) as Diaz (another Larry ex)
- [Rob Huebel](#) as Joe (Dave's neighbor)
- [Paul Scheer](#) as Dave (Joe's neighbor)
- [Helen Hunt](#) as Lucinda (the Lizas' mother)
- [Colin Hanks](#) as Charlie (the scavenger hunter)
- [Charlie Day](#) as Lonny (Krista's guy)
- [Mary Elizabeth Ellis](#) as Krista (Lonny's gal)
- [Pauly Shore](#) as himself

	<a href="#">United Artists Releasing</a>
<b>Release dates</b>	January 29, 2021 ( <a href="#">Sundance</a> ) July 20, 2021 ( <a href="#">United States</a> )
<b>Running time</b>	82 minutes <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	<a href="#">United States</a>
<b>Language</b>	<a href="#">English</a>
<b>Box office</b>	\$16,104 <sup>[2]</sup>

## Production

The married team of Wein and Zoe Lister-Jones, who had not yet [separated](#) at the time, reached out to numerous actor friends, and even some actors they did not know, to say "If you're interested in starting to step outdoors in whatever fashion that may be and however energetically, we'll meet you halfway."<sup>[3]</sup> The couple felt that their years of experience working a free form style together helped facilitate doing so with such a large and diverse cast, over a series of numerous vignettes.<sup>[3]</sup>

The film was shot and completed in [Los Angeles, California](#), during the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

## Release

The film had its world premiere at the [2021 Sundance Film Festival](#) on January 29, 2021.<sup>[5]</sup> It was also scheduled to screen at [South by Southwest](#) in March 2021,<sup>[6]</sup> which ended up being a [virtual SXSW festival](#) as the [COVID-19 pandemic in Austin](#) remained troubling. In May 2021, [American International Pictures](#) acquired worldwide distribution rights to the film, and set it for a release in the United States on July 20, 2021.<sup>[7]</sup> However, subsequent worldwide waves extended the [COVID-19 pandemic through 2021](#), and the film was released through video-on-demand and streaming services.

## Critical response

On [Rotten Tomatoes](#), the film has an approval rating of 68% based on reviews from 74 critics, with an average rating of 6/10. The critics consensus reads: "It can feel more like a collection of skits than a cohesive story, but *How It Ends* is a comedic vision of the apocalypse with fleeting moments of brilliance."<sup>[8]</sup> On [Metacritic](#), the film has a weighted average score of 57 out of 100, based on 17 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".<sup>[9]</sup>

## References

- <sup>[1]</sup> "How It Ends" (<https://fpg.festival.sundance.org/film-info/5fd022662885b86d4b9463e2>). *Sundance Film Festival*. Retrieved December 15, 2020.
- <sup>[2]</sup> "How It Ends" ([https://www.boxofficemojo.com/title/tt13648228/?ref\\_=bo\\_se\\_r\\_1](https://www.boxofficemojo.com/title/tt13648228/?ref_=bo_se_r_1)). *Box Office Mojo*. Retrieved July 30, 2021.
- <sup>[3]</sup> Lindahl, Chris (January 31, 2021). "'How It Ends' Filmmakers Daryl Wein and Zoe Lister-Jones on How They Assembled a Dream Cast in a Pandemic" (<https://www.indiewire.com/vi>

deo/how-it-ends-filmmakers-daryl-wein-and-zoe-lister-jones-1234613157/). *IndieWire*. Retrieved January 31, 2021.

4. Tracy Brown (January 29, 2021). "Made during the pandemic, Sundance comedy 'How It Ends' is a love letter to Los Angeles" (<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movie/story/2021-01-29/how-it-ends-sundance-panel/>). *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved July 2, 2023.
5. Debruge, Peter (December 15, 2020). "Sundance Film Festival Lineup Features 38 First-Time Directors, Including Rebecca Hall and Robin Wright" (<https://variety.com/2020/film/news/sundance-film-festival-announces-2021-lineup-1234854059/>). *Variety*. Retrieved December 15, 2020.
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7. Donnelly, Matt (May 10, 2021). "Zoe Lister-Jones Sundance Player 'How It Ends' Sells to MGM's American International Pictures (EXCLUSIVE)" (<https://variety.com/2021/film/news/zoe-lister-jones-mgm-buys-how-it-ends-1234969949/>). *Variety*. Retrieved May 10, 2021.
8. "How It Ends" ([https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/how\\_it\\_ends\\_2021](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/how_it_ends_2021)). *Rotten Tomatoes*. Fandango. Retrieved May 14, 2023.
9. "How It Ends Reviews" (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/how-it-ends-2021>). *Metacritic*. CBS Interactive. Retrieved July 31, 2022.

## External links

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- *How It Ends* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13648228/>) at IMDb
  - *How It Ends* (<https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v728173>) at AllMovie
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