

Blacklight (film)

Blacklight is a 2022 action thriller film directed and co-written by Mark Williams. The film stars Liam Neeson as a brooding FBI fixer who becomes involved in a government conspiracy; Emmy Raver-Lampman, Taylor John Smith, and Aidan Quinn also star.^[4]

Blacklight was released in the United States on February 11, 2022, by Briarcliff Entertainment. The film was a box-office bomb, grossing only \$16 million against its \$43 million budget, and was panned by critics.

Plot

Sofia Flores was an inspiring political activist who had the courage to make a stand for what she believed in. On a recent visit to Washington, D.C., she gave an impassioned speech at a rally for women's and racial equality. Despite facing countless threats and warnings, Sofia continued to speak out against the injustices she faced. That evening, after the rally had ended, she made her way home, unfortunately unaware of the fate that awaited her. In a devastating and deliberate act, Sofia was killed in a hit-and-run attack right outside her home. Her death shocked the nation and sparked outrage over the blatant lack of protection for activists like her. Sofia is now remembered everywhere as a brave champion of women's and racial equality and her legacy serves as an inspiration for other activists to speak out despite the risks.

Travis Block is a Vietnam War veteran who works in the shadows for FBI Director Gabriel Robinson. His job is to handle difficult tasks with discretion. He's been with the bureau for many years, but now that his daughter and granddaughter are getting older, he longs to retire and spend more time with them. Unfortunately, Robinson is reluctant to let him go and assigns him a new mission, to find and bring in undercover FBI Agent Dusty Crane. Block is dissatisfied with the assignment but his loyalty to the bureau forces him to accept it. Knowing that this could take a long time, Travis knows that it will delay his life plans of spending time with his family, but he also knows that it is his duty to complete his last mission. He still hasn't given up hope that he will come out of this mission in time and be able to near his family sooner or later.

Blacklight



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>Mark Williams</u>
Screenplay by	<u>Nick May</u> <u>Mark Williams</u>
Story by	<u>Nick May</u> <u>Brandon Reavis</u>
Produced by	<u>Mark Williams</u> <u>Paul Currie</u> <u>Myles Nestel</u> <u>Alevé Loh</u> <u>Coco Xiaolu Ma</u>
Starring	<u>Liam Neeson</u> <u>Emmy Raver-Lampman</u> <u>Taylor John Smith</u> <u>Aidan Quinn</u>
Cinematography	<u>Shelly Johnson</u>
Edited by	<u>Michael P. Shawver</u>
Music by	<u>Mark Isham</u>

However, Crane goes rogue and contacts Mira Jones, a journalist, claiming to have information about the murder of Flores. Despite being relentlessly pursued by Block, an extremely skilled special agent, and the FBI, Crane manages to escape on more than a few occasions. He arranges to meet with Jones at a museum, where Block follows the journalist to the meeting. However, Crane foils each of Block's attempts to apprehend him and escapes yet again. Just before Crane is shot dead by two FBI Agents, he reveals to Block that it was Robinson, a powerful underworld figure who had ordered the killing of Flores. The revelation comes too late for both the criminal and the special agent, signalling the tragic end of their deadly game of hide and seek.

Block and Jones had a chance to meet again and catch up. But their reunion was quickly met with grim news, Jones had heard from Crane that the FBI had a top secret program called Operation Unity. According to Crane, it was being run by Robinson, and it involved killing innocent civilians such as Flores. Horrified, Block had to do something. He went directly to Robinson and asked him what was going on with Operation Unity. However, Robinson didn't give him any satisfactory answers, instead warning Block that he should stay out of it and implicitly threatened his family. This didn't sit well with Block, prompting him to do his own investigation into the matter.

When Drew, Jones' editor, sends Jones home and writes the story about the mysterious deaths of Crane and Flores. That night, on his way home, the same two FBI agents that killed Crane and Flores cause a car accident that results in his death. While the news of Drew's death weighs heavily on Jones and colleagues, Block is concerned that his family had suddenly gone missing. Jones and her colleagues began to connect the dots from the mysterious deaths and Block investigates the disappearance of the family.

Block goes to Robinson's house and forces him to give him a hard drive in his safe which contains all the records of the FBI's activities. Block is waylaid by several of Robinson's men but manages to escape.

Jones and Block manage to obtain the information on the hard drive regarding Operation Unity and discover that the operation is a government-backed infiltration and sabotage plan. The plan involves using advanced technology to spy on foreign organizations and sabotage their operations from within. The plan has been in motion for several years and is nearing completion. Jones and Block realize that if the information falls into the wrong hands, it could cause irreparable damage not only to their country but to the world. They must act fast and find a way to stop the operation in its tracks before it's too late. With the help of their allies, they formulate a plan to expose Operation Unity to the world and put a stop to it once and for all.

Production companies	Zero Gravity Management Footloose Productions The Solution Entertainment Group Sina Studios Fourstar Films Elevate Production Finance <u>Film Victoria</u> Lightstream Pictures Australia <u>Screen Australia</u>
Distributed by	Rialto Distribution (Australia) <u>Briarcliff Entertainment</u> (United States)
Release dates	February 10, 2022 (Australia) February 11, 2022 (United States)
Running time	104 minutes
Countries	Australia United States
Language	English
Budget	\$43 million ^[1]
Box office	\$16 million ^{[2][3]}

The review of the hard drive by Block and Jones revealed that Crane had developed feelings for his assignment, Flores. Robinson had Crane completely fooled, playing on his feelings in order to make sure he stayed on task. After Crane became too attached to Flores, Robinson had her killed and disposed of. Block confronted Robinson with the evidence he had found, leading to Robinson admitting that his mission was part of a government cover-up, Operation Unity. With all the evidence stacked up, Robinson had no choice but to turn himself in to the authorities and confess to his crimes. With justice served and the truth uncovered, Jones was able to complete her story about the government plot; while Block, having accomplished his mission, retired from his profession and was finally reunited with his family who had been in Witness Protection for a considerable amount of time. They could all now finally come home together in peace.

Cast

- Liam Neeson as Travis Block^{[5][6]}
- Emmy Raver-Lampman as Mira Jones
- Taylor John Smith^[7] as Dusty Crane
- Aidan Quinn^[7] as Gabriel Robinson
- Claire van der Boom as Amanda Block
- Yael Stone as Helen Davidson
- Tim Draxl as Drew Hawthorne
- Georgia Flood as Pearl
- Andrew Shaw as Jordan Lockhart
- Melanie Jarnson as Sofia Flores
- Zac Lemons as Wallace
- Gabriella Sengos as Natalie Block
- Daniel Turbill as Running Man

Production

Principal photography of the film started in November 2020 in Melbourne, Australia.^{[1][8][5]} In January 2021 it was announced that a car chase scene would be filmed in Canberra.^{[9][10]}

Mark Isham composed the film score. A film soundtrack has been released.

Release

Blacklight was released in the United States by Briarcliff Entertainment on February 11, 2022.^[11] The film was released video-on-demand on March 3,^[12] while the film released on Blu-ray and DVD in May 3 by Universal Pictures Home Entertainment.^[13]

Reception

Box office

In the United States and Canada, *Blacklight* was released alongside *Death on the Nile* and *Marry Me*, and was projected to gross \$1–5 million from 2,772 theaters in its opening weekend.^[14] The film went on to debut to \$3.5 million, finishing fifth at the box office.^[15] Overall audiences during its opening were 64% male, 83% above the age of 25, 58% above 35, and 35% above 45. The ethnic breakdown of the audience showed that 53% were Caucasian, 14% Hispanic and Latino Americans, 15% African American, and 18% Asian or other.^[16] The film finished tenth at the box office in its second weekend with \$1.7 million.^[17] It dropped out of the box office top ten in its third weekend with \$878,687.^[18]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website *Rotten Tomatoes*, 11% of 105 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 3.8/10. The website's consensus reads: "Turn it off."^[19] *Metacritic*, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 27 out of 100, based on 22 critics, indicating "generally unfavorable" reviews.^[20] Audiences polled by *PostTrak* gave the film a 58% positive score, with 39% saying they would definitely recommend it.^[16]

Joe Leydon of *Variety* said: "If you approach it with sufficiently lowered expectations, and have fond memories of the '70s paranoid dramas that obviously inspired director and co-writer Mark Williams, this might be your house-brand jam."^[21] Frank Scheck of *The Hollywood Reporter* wrote: "Lacking a high concept or memorable central character, the film is a by-the-numbers actioner that coasts on its star's soulful gravitas and low-key charisma."^[22]

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External links

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