

Joy Ride (2023 film)

Joy Ride is a 2023 American comedy film directed by Adele Lim, in her feature directorial debut, and written by Cherry Chevapravatdumrong and Teresa Hsiao, from a story by Lim, Chevapravatdumrong, and Hsiao. The film stars Ashley Park, Sherry Cola, Stephanie Hsu, and Sabrina Wu, with Ronny Chieng, Meredith Hagner, David Denman, Annie Mumolo, Timothy Simons, and Daniel Dae Kim appearing in supporting roles.

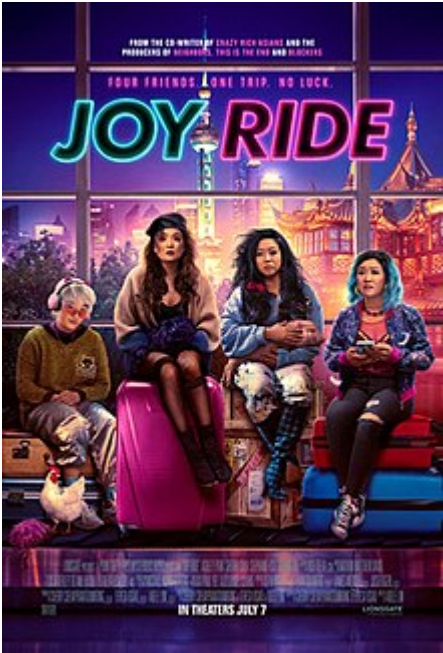
The film was announced in 2018 following the partnership deal between Point Grey Pictures and Lionsgate, with Lim being confirmed as director in 2021. The cast was announced between August and October of the same year, and filming took place in British Columbia throughout the latter month.

Joy Ride had its world premiere at SXSW on March 17, 2023, and was released in the United States on July 7, 2023, by Lionsgate Films. The film received positive reviews from critics, who praised the lead performances and humor.

Plot

Audrey Sullivan, a Chinese adoptee with white parents, Joe and Mary Sullivan, lives in White Hills, Washington, with her childhood best friend, Lolo Chen. Audrey is an overachiever who works as a lawyer at a prestigious firm, while Lolo struggles to make ends meet with her sex-positive art. Promised a promotion to partner if she can close a deal with a Chinese businessman, Audrey and Lolo take a trip to China, joined by Lolo's cousin Vanessa, nicknamed "Deadeye", who is socially awkward and obsessed with K-pop. In Beijing, Audrey meets with her college roommate and close friend Kat, who is an actress on a popular daytime show, and despite being sexually promiscuous in college, is engaged to her co-star and Christian fiancé Clarence, who is saving himself for marriage.

The group meet Chao, the Chinese businessman, at a party. Chao says that in order for him to do business with Audrey, he must know about her birth family, whom she has never met. Lolo lies to Chao that Audrey is in close contact with

Joy Ride	
	
Theatrical release poster	
Directed by	Adele Lim
Screenplay by	Cherry Chevapravatdumrong Teresa Hsiao
Story by	Cherry Chevapravatdumrong Teresa Hsiao Adele Lim
Produced by	Seth Rogen Evan Goldberg James Weaver Josh Fagen Cherry Chevapravatdumrong Teresa Hsiao Adele Lim
Starring	Ashley Park Sherry Cola Stephanie Hsu

them. Prior to the trip, Lolo had called Audrey's adoption agency and tracked them down. Audrey resolves to meet her birth mother, Min Park and take her to Chao's party to close the deal.

The quartet board a train to Audrey's adoption agency, where they sit next to a drug dealer. They are forced to consume various amounts of cocaine after a train inspection; the drug dealer then steals their luggage and has them kicked off the train. Stranded in the middle of rural China, Lolo contacts former NBA star Baron Davis, whose team is currently playing in China. The four injure some of the players in sex-related accidents the following night, causing the team to refuse to drive them to their destination.

The group hitchhike their way to their destination. There, Audrey discovers that her mother is not Chinese but rather Korean. In a last-ditch effort to secure the deal, one of Deadeye's online friends secures them a private jet to Seoul, but without their passports, they pretend to be a new Korean idol group to pass the border. Lolo livestreams their idol performance of "WAP" on Instagram Live, only for Kat's skirt to accidentally fall off, revealing a large devil tattoo on her vulva. They are forced to instead take a boat into mainland Korea.

Lolo's livestream inadvertently goes viral, with hundreds of millions of people seeing Kat's vulva. Chao calls Audrey to inform her that the deal is off; Audrey then is fired from her job, while Kat is at risk of losing her television deal. The quartet have a falling out and split. Audrey learns that her birth mother has died and visits her grave, but meets her birth mother's husband, Dae Han there. Dae Han shows Audrey a video recorded by her birth mother before her death and tells her that her friends had told him he might find Audrey at her birth mother's grave. Meanwhile, Kat reconciles with Clarence. Lolo moves out of Audrey's house. Audrey returns to Seattle and makes peace with Lolo and Deadeye.

One year later, Audrey, Lolo, Kat, and Deadeye are in Paris for a best-friends trip. Audrey has started her own law firm, Lolo has begun waiting tables and selling her art, Deadeye has accepted themselves as non-binary, while Kat's acting career has recovered and she is still engaged to Clarence.

## Cast

- Ashley Park as Audrey Sullivan, a lawyer who is the ostensibly Chinese child of adoptive white parents<sup>[5]</sup>
  - Lennon Yee as young Audrey Sullivan
  - Isla Rose Hall as teenage Audrey Sullivan
- Sherry Cola as Lolo Chen, an aspiring artist who is Audrey's best friend<sup>[5]</sup>
  - Belle Zhang as young Lolo Chen
  - Chloe Pun as teenage Lolo Chen

	<u>Sabrina Wu</u>
<b>Cinematography</b>	Paul Yee
<b>Edited by</b>	Nena Erb
<b>Music by</b>	Nathan Matthew David
<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Point Grey Pictures</u> Red Mysterious Hippo
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Lionsgate</u>
<b>Release dates</b>	March 17, 2023 ( <u>SXSW</u> ) July 7, 2023 (United States)
<b>Running time</b>	95 minutes <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$32 million <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Box office</b>	\$15.8 million <sup>[3][4]</sup>

- Stephanie Hsu as Kat Huang, a famous Chinese actress who was Audrey's former college roommate<sup>[5]</sup>
- Sabrina Wu as Vanessa / Deadeye, Lolo's eccentric cousin who is obsessed with K-pop<sup>[5]</sup>
- Ronny Chieng as Chao, a Chinese businessman<sup>[6]</sup>
- Meredith Hagner as Jess, the drug smuggler on the Chinese train<sup>[7]</sup>
- David Denman as Joe Sullivan, Audrey's adoptive father<sup>[8]</sup>
- Annie Mumolo as Mary Sullivan, Audrey's adoptive mother<sup>[8]</sup>
- Timothy Simons as Frank, Audrey's law firm boss
- Daniel Dae Kim as Dae Han, the husband of Audrey's birth mother
- Desmond Chiam as Clarence, Kat's celibate fiancé<sup>[6]</sup>
- Baron Davis as a fictional version of himself, a former NBA basketball player who is now playing in China
- Lori Tan Chinn as Nai Nai, Lolo's grandmother<sup>[8]</sup>
- Alexander Hodge as Todd, a basketball player on Baron's team and Kat's ex-boyfriend<sup>[8]</sup>
- Chris Pang as Kenny, a basketball player on Baron's team<sup>[6]</sup>
- Rohain Arora as Arvind, a basketball player on Baron's team
- Victor Lau as Jiaying, a basketball player on Baron's team
- Debbie Fan as Jenny Chen, Lolo's mother
- Kenneth Liu as Wey Chen, Lolo's father
- Michelle Choi-Lee as Min Park, Audrey's birth mother

## Production

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On August 9, 2018, it was announced that Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg were in negotiations to partner with Lionsgate through their production company Point Grey Pictures in a first-look deal to develop film and television projects.<sup>[9]</sup> On July 9, 2021, it was announced that screenwriter Adele Lim would make her feature directorial debut on an untitled R-rated comedy film from that deal, with Ashley Park joining the cast. The film was written by Cherry Chevapravatdumrong and Teresa Hsiao, based on a story they developed with Lim. Chevapravatdumrong, Hsiao, and Lim also produce alongside Rogen, Goldberg, James Weaver, and Josh Fagen. In a statement, Lim said, "This journey began with me, Cherry, and Teresa wanting to tell a story with characters who look like us, about women who are messy and thirsty, but have so much heart. Point Grey and Lionsgate have been incredible allies and partners from day one, and I am thrilled to be making my directing debut with them on a story that's so special to me."<sup>[10]</sup>

In August 2021, Sherry Cola and Stephanie Hsu were added to the cast.<sup>[11][12]</sup> In September, it was reported that Sabrina Wu would star as the fourth and final lead in the film.<sup>[13]</sup> Daniel Dae Kim was cast while working with Lim on *Raya and the Last Dragon*. He had previously worked with Park on Broadway and suggested her for the lead role.<sup>[14]</sup> Production began by October, with Desmond Chiam, Alexander Hodge, and Chris Pang joining the cast.<sup>[15]</sup> Filming occurred in Vancouver.<sup>[16]</sup> On October 7, a lewd playground serving as a set for the film was spotted in Maple Ridge, British Columbia.<sup>[17]</sup> Hsu used a body double for the scene involving her character's tattoo.<sup>[18][19]</sup> While the writers were considering an original composition for the scene where the characters pretend to be an idol group, they eventually decided that "WAP" served as "this perfect song that really encapsulated the movie at this pivotal moment", leading Lim

to write a letter to Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion asking for usage permission, meeting their approval. A scene involving a water buffalo was planned but not filmed.<sup>[20]</sup> In February 2023, the film's title was revealed to be *Joy Ride*.<sup>[21][22]</sup> The film's working title was *Joy Fuck Club*.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Release

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*Joy Ride* premiered at SXSW on March 17, 2023.<sup>[24]</sup> It was theatrically released on July 7, 2023, by Lionsgate Films.<sup>[8]</sup> It was originally scheduled to be released on June 23.<sup>[25]</sup>

The film was released for digital platforms on July 28, 2023, followed by a Blu-ray and DVD release on September 12, 2023.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Reception

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### Box office

In United States and Canada, *Joy Ride* was released alongside *Insidious: The Red Door*, and was projected to gross \$7–9 million from 2,820 theaters in its opening weekend.<sup>[27]</sup> The film made \$2.6 million on its first day, including \$1.1 million from Thursday night previews. The film went on to debut to \$5.9 million, finishing sixth at the box office.<sup>[28]</sup> In its second weekend the film made \$2.6 million, dropping 56% and finishing ninth.<sup>[29]</sup>

### Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 91% of 212 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 7.3/10. The website's consensus reads: "*Joy Ride* isn't afraid to shock with its gross-out gags, but this road trip's real surprise is how successfully it blends its raunchy humor with real heart."<sup>[30]</sup> Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 74 out of 100, based on 44 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.<sup>[31]</sup> Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "B−" on an A+ to F scale, while PostTrak reported 79% of filmgoers gave it a positive score.<sup>[28]</sup>

Lovia Gyarkye of *The Hollywood Reporter* called the film "a raunchy and propulsive feature directorial debut", adding that it "gets off on putting its characters through absurd, often side-splittingly funny situations" and "is packed with frenetic cocaine-fueled decision-making, raunchy threesomes and chaotic impersonations".<sup>[32]</sup> *Variety*'s Peter Debruge wrote, "The movie may not be *Bridesmaids*-level brilliant, but it's got more than a couple hall-of-fame-worthy comedy set-pieces".<sup>[33]</sup> *IndieWire*'s Marisa Mirabal gave the film a grade of A−, saying that it is "a prime example of how important representation is on screen and proves that Asian American comedians can be just as funny, raunchy, and successful as their white male counterparts."<sup>[34]</sup>

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## External links

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- *Joy Ride* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15268244/>) at *IMDb*
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