

# Ride the Eagle

***Ride the Eagle*** is a 2021 American comedy film directed by Trent O'Donnell, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jake Johnson. It stars Johnson, Susan Sarandon, J. K. Simmons, and D'Arcy Carden. Produced by The Walcott Company, it was released by Decal theatrically and through video on demand on July 30, 2021.

## Plot

Leif, a 40ish, perpetually adolescent man working as a band percussionist, lives in his friend Gorka's shed in Los Angeles, and is devoted to his black labrador Nora.

One day, he is informed that his hippy mom Honey has died of cancer. He greets the news with an indifferent shrug: she abandoned him at 12 to join a cult and had not contacted him since. She had tried to reach out toward the end, but he had rebuffed her.

Honey has left him her wood cabin in Yosemite – under the condition of completing a to-do list, explained on a pre-recorded video. The point of the tasks is to make a numbed Leif feel something, a final last effort to mend fences with him. Leif goes to the cabin and discovers the cabin's cabinets are stashed with marijuana. At first, it seems that she is just messing with him—one request is to row across the lake and sneak into a house to drop off what turns out to be a kiss-off note. He almost gets caught after leaving it, forcing him to sneak away. Another charges him with catching a fish for his dinner using his bare hands. So, he spends most of a day in a nearby stream, trying to catch one.

Another request is to call "the one that got away" and apologize for his mistakes, leading him to reestablish contact with former girlfriend Audrey. They turn out to still have some chemistry over the phone, but she is hesitant to do anything about it as she is recovering from a recent breakup. They try to have phone sex, but Leif has no idea how to, so Audrey soon gives up. She agrees to visit him at the cabin.

The next day, Gorka calls Leif to give him bad news. Not only does the rock band of youngsters for which he plays bongos wants him out, but the shed where he was living at the back of his property has been deemed illegal, and has to be destroyed. Leif looks out to see someone has gutted two rabbits and smeared them

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Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Trent O'Donnell</u>
<b>Written by</b>	<u>Jake Johnson</u> <u>Trent O'Donnell</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Huey M. Park</u> <u>Jake Johnson</u> <u>Trent O'Donnell</u> <u>Joe Hardesty</u> <u>D'Arcy Carden</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Jake Johnson</u> <u>D'Arcy Carden</u> <u>J. K. Simmons</u> <u>Susan Sarandon</u>
<b>Cinematography</b>	<u>Judd Overton</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Daniel Haworth</u>
<b>Music by</b>	<u>Jeff Cardoni</u>
<b>Production company</b>	<u>JTJ Films</u>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Decal</u>

over the windshield of his van. So, after he cleans it up, he sees the next task which is to play a song from the heart on the bongos. After doing so, Audrey calls back to say she is not coming.

Leif goes for a walk, leaving a reluctant Nora behind. On his return, she has disappeared. Frantic, he contacts the police and finally leaves a note in the cabin he had left the original note in, asking him not to hurt her. That night, the mysterious angry neighbor breaks into Leif/Honey's cabin and, similarly to calls he had made earlier, insults him in a jealous way.

The neighbor, Carl had believed Leif was her lover, not her son. Carl explains they had been on a break, so had no idea she had passed. He tells him she had felt terrible when Leif had refused to speak to her as an adult. Carl lists everything he will miss about Honey, finally offers Leif an olive branch and departs.

The last request is to hike to Green Lake. There, he is directed to find her ashes and read a note written by her. When he returns to the cabin, Nora is back, the huge stashes of pot are gone, and the last of her video tells him to reconsider and live his life.

Leif and Audrey text again, and he decides to take the eight-hour drive to see her.

## Cast

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- [Jake Johnson](#) as Leif
- [D'Arcy Carden](#) as Audrey
- [J. K. Simmons](#) as Carl
- [Susan Sarandon](#) as Honey
- [Eric Edelstein](#) as Officer Mike Nilsons

## Production

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*Ride the Eagle* was announced on May 18, 2021, when [Decal](#) acquired the distribution rights to the project and gave it a release date for July 30, 2021.<sup>[2]</sup> In a statement, co-writer [Jake Johnson](#) said that as filming took place during the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, "[Trent O'Donnell](#) and I wanted to make a movie about people coming together."<sup>[3][4]</sup> The [film score](#) was composed by [Jeff Cardoni](#).<sup>[5]</sup> In the United Kingdom, the film was released by Lightbulb Film Distribution in November 2021.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Reception

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On the [review aggregator](#) website [Rotten Tomatoes](#), 81% of 37 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.1/10. The website's consensus reads: "Minor yet charming, *Ride the Eagle* achieves sufficient altitude thanks to a sweet story and strong work from the Jake Johnson-led cast."<sup>[7]</sup> [Metacritic](#), which uses a [weighted average](#), assigned the film a score of 54 out of 100, based on 9 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.<sup>[8]</sup>

<b>Release date</b>	July 30, 2021
<b>Running time</b>	88 minutes
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$10 million <sup>[1]</sup>

*Variety*'s *Joe Leydon* wrote, "*Ride the Eagle* likely will be most warmly embraced by viewers who have experienced profoundly mixed emotions when hearing about the death of a loved one who frequently was extremely difficult to love. On the other hand, the movie's seriocomic consideration of how messy familial, sexual and professional relationships can be should have a well-nigh universal resonance."<sup>[9]</sup>

## References

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## External links

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- *Ride the Eagle* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14673560/>) at *IMDb*

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