

Guy Ritchie's The Covenant

Guy Ritchie's The Covenant (or simply *The Covenant*) is a 2023 American action drama film co-written, produced and directed by <u>Guy Ritchie</u>. The film stars <u>Jake Gyllenhaal</u> and <u>Dar Salim</u>. Its plot follows John Kinley, a U.S. Army <u>Green Beret</u> master sergeant, and Ahmed, his Afghan interpreter, fighting the Taliban.

The film was theatrically released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and STX films in the United States on April 21, 2023, received generally positive reviews from critics and has grossed \$21 million.

Plot

In March 2018, amidst the War in Afghanistan, U.S. Army Special Forces Master Sergeant John Kinley and his unit are ambushed by a truck bomb attack orchestrated by the Taliban during a routine vehicle inspection at Lashkargah, which claims the life of his interpreter. In need of a replacement, he is introduced to Ahmed Abdullah, a steadfast yet disliked interpreter, who claims he pursues the job only for money. During an undercover capture mission, Kinley learns that Ahmed was previously affiliated with the Taliban through the opium trade but had defected when the organization murdered his son. Ahmed later saves Kinley's team from being ambushed by a Taliban unit aided by a compromised Afghan National Army soldier, earning Kinley's respect.

During another raid to check for a possible insurgent arms cache about 100 kilometres (62 miles) north of Bagram Air Base, Kinley's unit is attacked by Taliban reinforcements, who kill everyone except for him and Ahmed. The duo manage to escape on foot, killing several Taliban fighters in the process. Whilst attempting to return to the airbase by navigating through the mountainous Afghan terrain, they are once again ambushed by insurgents, who manage to wound Kinley, before clubbing him with a rifle butt, incapacitating him. Ahmed manages to kill the Taliban and resolves to take Kinley back to the air base. Receiving help from some sympathetic Afghans, Ahmed evades the Taliban hunting them, carrying Kinley over the country's treacherous mountain topography. Several days later Ahmed and Kinley are near Bagram but are attacked by Taliban fighters; Ahmed kills the fighters but is shortly thereafter apprehended by U.S. troops.

Guy Ritchie's The Covenant



Theatrical release poster

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Directed by	Guy Ritchie
Written by	Guy Ritchie
	Ivan Atkinson
	Marn Davies
Produced by	Guy Ritchie
	Ivan Atkinson
	John Friedberg
	Josh Berger
Starring	Jake Gyllenhaal
	Dar Salim
	Antony Starr
	Alexander
	Ludwig
	Sean Sagar
	Bobby Schofield
	Emily Beecham
	Jonny Lee Miller
Cinematography	Ed Wild

Seven weeks later, Kinley, having been repatriated to his home in Santa Clarita, California, is completely unaware of how he was saved, but understands Ahmed's role in it. Upon learning that Ahmed and his family were forced to move underground owing to the duo's escapade having become local folklore, Kinley attempts to procure U.S. visas for them for over a month, but in vain. Emotionally tormented and rendered near sleepless by his inability to repay his indebtedness towards Ahmed, Kinley finally resolves to save him himself, enlisting the assistance of his superior, Lieutenant Colonel Vokes, to procure the visas.

Returning to Afghanistan under the alias of Ron Kay, Kinley meets with Parker, a private military contractor, who promises to provide support on the condition that the former locates Ahmed first. Kinley meets Ahmed's brother Ali, a Taliban supplier who manages to smuggle Kinley across their territory; in the process, he kills two insurgents after nearly being caught at a road checkpoint, which alerts the Taliban. Vokes informs Kinley that the visas have been processed and are with Parker. Finally arriving at Ahmed's hideout, Kinley persuades him and his family to accompany him to the U.S. Meanwhile, Parker deduces Kinley's true identity;

Edited by	James Herbert
Music by	Christopher Benstead
Production companies	STXfilms Toff Guy Films
Distributed by	Metro-Goldwyn- Mayer (United States) STX International (International)
Release date	April 21, 2023
Running time	123 minutes $^{[1]}$
Country	United States $^{[1]}$
Language	English
Budget	\$55 million ^[2]
Box office	\$21.8 million ^{[3][4]}

realizing that the duo is in danger due to their value to the Taliban, he arranges for an $\underline{AC-130}$ gunship and an \underline{Apache} attack helicopter to provide air support. Concurrently, the Taliban mount an attack on Kinley, who manages to escape with Ahmed's family to the nearby Darunta Dam.

Cornered by approaching Taliban units, the duo engage them in a protracted gunfight, which ends when they run out of ammunition. However, the AC-130 and Apache helicopter arrive and wipe out the attackers. Parker arrives from the other end of the dam with a relief column of anti-Taliban <u>technicals</u>. He tells Kinley he would have supported his mission gratis had he known upfront it was him. Escorted back to Bagram, the group boards an Airbus A400M leaving Afghanistan.

The film's ending title states that in the aftermath of the <u>Taliban's recapture of Afghanistan</u>, over 300 Afghan interpreters affiliated with the U.S. military were murdered by the organization, with thousands more still in hiding.

Cast

- Jake Gyllenhaal as Master Sgt. John Kinley
- Dar Salim as Ahmed
- Sean Sagar as Charlie "Jizzy" Crow
- Jason Wong as Joshua "JJ" Jung
- Rhys Yates as Tom 'Tom Cat' Hancock
- Christian Ochoa as Eduardo "Chow Chow" Lopez
- Bobby Schofield as Steve Kersher
- Emily Beecham as Caroline Kinley
- Jonny Lee Miller as Col. Vokes
- Alexander Ludwig as Sgt. Declan O'Brady

- Reza Diako as Haadee
- James Nelson-Joyce as Jack "Jack Jack" Jackson
- Antony Starr as Eddie Parker
- Fariba Sheikhan as Basira

Production

It was announced in October 2021 that <u>Jake Gyllenhaal</u> was cast to star in an untitled film, to be directed by <u>Guy Ritchie</u>, and co-written with Ivan Atkinson and Marn Davies. In January 2022, <u>Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer</u> bought U.S. distribution rights to the film, which had been titled *The Interpreter*, planning to distribute it via their <u>United Artists Releasing</u> joint venture (which is later Amazon MGM Studios Distribution), while <u>STXfilms</u> co-financed the film and handled international sales, <u>Amazon Prime Video</u> acquired some international distribution rights, as well as post-theatrical streaming rights in the United States. [6][7]

Filming began in February 2022 in <u>Alicante</u>, <u>Spain</u>, with <u>Dar Salim</u>, <u>Alexander Ludwig</u>, <u>Antony Starr</u>, <u>Jason Wong</u>, Bobby Schofield, Sean Sagar, Christian Ochoa and <u>Emily Beecham</u> added to the cast. Other filming locations in Spain later included <u>Petrer</u>, Alicante, <u>Sax</u>, Alicante, <u>Alt Vinalopó</u>, <u>Villajoyosa</u> and Zaragoza. [9]

In December 2022, Ritchie revealed that the title had been changed from *The Interpreter* to *The Covenant*. The film was later officially titled *Guy Ritchie's The Covenant*, reportedly to distinguish it from the 2006 film of the same name. [11]

Release

The Covenant was released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in the United States on April 21, 2023, and internationally by Amazon Prime Video. [12]

The film was released digitally on May 9, with a <u>Blu-ray</u> and <u>DVD</u> release following on June 20 by <u>MGM</u> Home Entertainment. [13] On June 16, 2023, Amazon Prime Video began streaming the film in Canada. [14]

Reception

Box office

In the United States and Canada, *The Covenant* was released alongside <u>Evil Dead Rise</u>, <u>Chevalier</u>, and the wide expansion of <u>Beau Is Afraid</u>, and was projected to gross around \$6 million from 2,611 theaters in its opening weekend. The film made \$2.2 million on its first day, and went on to debut to \$6.3 million, finishing third behind <u>The Super Mario Bros. Movie</u> and <u>Evil Dead Rise</u>. In its second weekend the film made \$3.6 million (a drop of 43%), finishing in ninth.

Critical response

On the <u>review aggregator</u> website <u>Rotten Tomatoes</u>, 83% of 119 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.8/10. The website's consensus reads: "A satisfying, well-acted war thriller with surprising dramatic depths, *Guy Ritchie's The Covenant* tells a solid story with impressive restraint." [18]

<u>Metacritic</u>, which uses a <u>weighted average</u>, assigned the film a score of 63 out of 100, based on 28 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews. [19] Audiences surveyed by <u>CinemaScore</u> gave the film an average grade of "A" on an A+ to F scale, while those polled by <u>PostTrak</u> gave it a 92% positive score, with 77% saying they would recommend it. [16]

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External links

• Guy Ritchie's The Covenant (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4873118/) at IMDb

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