

Watcher (film)

Watcher is a 2022 psychological thriller film written and directed by Chloe Okuno in her feature directorial debut, based on an original screenplay by Zack Ford. The film stars Maika Monroe, Karl Glusman, and Burn Gorman.

Watcher had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival on January 21, 2022, where it was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize. The film was theatrically released in the United States on June 3, 2022, to positive reviews from critics.

Plot

American couple Julia and Francis relocate to Bucharest, moving into an apartment building with a large picture window. While Francis works long hours, Julia grows unnerved by a man in the building across the street, who watches her on a daily basis. Her fears are heightened when she learns of a serial killer, dubbed "the Spider" by local media, who is decapitating young women. In the city one day, she senses a man following her at a theater and a supermarket. But when Francis and Julia visit the market to review security footage, it proves inconclusive.

Julia befriends her neighbor, Irina, who shows Julia a pistol her boyfriend Cristian gave her for protection. Later that night, Julia waves at the man in the window, and he waves back. Suspecting it's the same man who followed her, she calls the police. Francis accompanies an officer to the building opposite to speak with the man but later tells Julia that she is overreacting.

Soon after, Julia spots the man on the street and follows him to a strip club, where he works as a janitor. Irina, a dancer at the club, spots her. Julia questions Irina about the man, but she knows nothing. At home, Julia has a vivid dream about being attacked and strangled, but awakes only to hear a scream from Irina's apartment and convinces the landlady to unlock it, but they find no sign of Irina.

The next day, Cristian arrives searching for Irina. They try to confront the janitor at his apartment, but no one answers the door. After Christian leaves, Julia works up the nerve to knock on the door herself, but it is answered by an elderly man. As she gets on the elevator to leave, she sees the janitor. That night, a police officer arrives at her apartment accompanied by the man,

Watcher



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>Chloe Okuno</u>
Screenplay by	Chloe Okuno
Based on	the screenplay by Zack Ford
Produced by	<u>Roy Lee</u> <div>Steven Schneider</div> Derek DauchyMason NovickJohn FinemoreAaron KaplanSean Perrone
Starring	<u>Maika Monroe</u> <u>Karl Glusman</u> <u>Burn Gorman</u>
Cinematography	Benjamin Kirk Nielsen
Edited by	Michael Block
Music by	Nathan Halpern

identified as Daniel Weber, who accuses Julia of stalking him. The officer calls the incident a misunderstanding and Julia shakes Daniel's hand. Francis later shows Julia a news report stating that the Spider has been apprehended.

Julia accompanies Francis to a company party and gleans that he has made jokes about her fears to his coworkers. She angrily leaves and boards the subway, where she notices Daniel in the near-empty car. When he attempts to explain why he watches her—that he lives an isolated, unexciting life caring for his father—Julia notices what appears to be the outline of a severed head in his shopping bag. She returns home and begins packing but is interrupted by music playing in Irina's apartment. Inside, she finds Irina's headless corpse before Daniel smothers her with a plastic bag.

When Julia regains consciousness, Daniel recounts how he killed Irina and hid with her body when Julia and the landlady entered the apartment. Julia hears Francis enter their apartment next door, but when she attempts to scream, Daniel slashes her throat. Francis calls Julia's cell phone, which he hears ringing inside Irina's apartment. He sees Daniel exiting and begins to walk toward him, but Julia, having feigned dying, suddenly kills Daniel with Irina's pistol. She steps out of Irina's apartment, covered in blood, and stares at Francis.

Cast

- Maika Monroe as Julia
- Karl Glusman as Francis
- Burn Gorman as Daniel Weber
- Tudor Petruț as taxi driver
- Mădălina Anea as Irina
- Cristina Deleanu as Eleanora
- Daniel Nuță as Cristian

Production

In March 2021, it was announced that Maika Monroe, Karl Glusman and Burn Gorman would star in a film titled *Watcher* for Image Nation Abu Dhabi and Spooky Pictures.^{[4][5]}

Principal photography began on March 8, 2021, and concluded on April 16, 2021, in Bucharest, Romania.^[6] The film took approximately six weeks to make in total.^[7]

Release

Production companies	<u>Image Nation Abu Dhabi</u> <u>AGC International</u> Spooky Pictures Lost City
Distributed by	<u>IFC Midnight Shudder</u> (United States) <u>Universal Pictures</u> <u>Focus Features</u> (international)
Release dates	January 21, 2022 (Sundance) June 3, 2022 (United States)
Running time	96 minutes ^[1]
Countries	United Arab Emirates United States Romania ^[2]
Language	English
Budget	\$5 million ^[3]
Box office	\$3.2 million ^[1]

It premiered in the Sundance Film Festival on January 21, 2022, where it was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize.^[8] Afterwards, IFC Midnight and Shudder acquired the North American distribution rights to the film,^[9] while AGC International sold worldwide rights outside North America to Focus Features.^[9] It was theatrically released in the United States on June 3, 2022,^[10] and on-demand on June 21, 2022 by IFC Films.^[11] The film was released on Blu-ray in North America on October 4, 2022.^[12]

Reception

Box office

Watcher grossed \$2 million in the United States and Canada, and \$1.2 million in other territories, for a total worldwide of \$3.2 million,^[1] against a production budget of \$5 million.^[3]

In the United States and Canada, the film earned \$826,775 from 764 theaters in its opening weekend.^[13] It made \$335,376 (a drop of 59%) in its second weekend,^[14] \$87,155 (−74%) in its third,^[15] \$21,843 (−74.9%) in its fourth,^[16] and \$7,386 (−66.2%) in its fifth.^[17]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 88% of 149 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.9/10. The website's consensus reads: "Although its story may lack surprises, *Watcher* benefits from director Chloe Okuno's chilling grip on the material – and Maika Monroe's terrific work in the leading role."^[18] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 72 out of 100, based on 27 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.^[19]

Lena Wilson of *The New York Times* called it "one of this century's most arresting tales of female anxiety."^[20]

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External links

- *Watcher* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12004038/>) at IMDb
 - *Watcher* (<https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v731350>) at AllMovie
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