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Wildcat (2023 film)

Wildcat is a 2023 American biographical drama film about American novelist Flannery O'Connor struggling to publish her first novel. Also based on O'Connor's short stories, the film was directed by Ethan Hawke and written by Hawke and Shelby Gaines. It stars Maya Hawke, Rafael Casal, Philip Ettinger, Cooper Hoffman, Steve Zahn, and Laura Linney.

Its world premiere was held at the 50th Telluride Film Festival on September 1, 2023. It was given a limited release on May 3, 2024, with wide release to follow.

Plot

Flannery O'Connor, an idiosyncratic young Southern writer and faithful Catholic, imagines a melodramatic movie trailer with a crazed, nymphomaniacal boarder, Star Drake (played by Maya Hawke, who also plays O'Connor and multiple other roles) getting her boarding-house hosts into violent trouble. Many other imaginary and real episodes then occur, often following various short stories of O'Connor, including "Everything That Rises Must Converge", "Good Country People", "The Life You Save May Be Your Own", "Revelation", and "Parker's Back".

After winning a writing competition, she travels to New York to get approval from a publisher for her novel, *Wise Blood*, but refuses the request that she outline her work. She discusses her novel with Robert Lowell, someone with whom she has mutual romantic feelings, though he eventually marries Elizabeth Hardwick, whom O'Connor meets at a writers' party where she does not get along well with other people, even though Lowell describes O'Connor as his most talented student. (Hardwick calls the Eucharist a mere symbol; O'Connor rejoins, "If it's just a symbol, to hell with it!") At the party, she relates the anecdote that when young, she was in a Pathé movie because she had trained a chicken to walk backward.

Coming back from New York, she feels tired and has facial rashes; she learns she has lupus, of which her father died. She refuses to see a doctor for a while, though she finally gets treatment for it, though she eventually must use crutches, and at one point falls down the stairs. Her mother Regina, who has

Wildcat



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>Ethan Hawke</u>
Written by	<u>Ethan Hawke</u> <u>Shelby Gaines</u>
Based on	Short stories by <u>Flannery O'Connor</u>
Produced by	<u>Joe Goodman</u> <u>Ethan Hawke</u> <u>Ryan Hawke</u> <u>Karri O'Reilly</u> <u>Cory Pyke</u>
Starring	<u>Maya Hawke</u> <u>Rafael Casal</u> <u>Philip Ettinger</u> <u>Cooper Hoffman</u> <u>Steve Zahn</u> <u>Laura Linney</u>
Cinematography	<u>Steve Cosens</u>
Edited by	<u>Barry Poltermann</u>
Music by	<u>Latham Gaines</u> <u>Shelby Gaines</u>

racist tendencies, tries to help her, though she does not always enjoy Flannery's work, which she sees as abrasive. Flannery buys a peacock to comfort herself.

An Irish priest counsels her about her writing and other struggles; she mentions James Joyce's *Ulysses* being banned in Ireland, which he agrees is needless. She says she is trying to be a good Catholic; the priest recommends she do acts of charity. She says all she has is her writing; the priest recommends she use that. After receiving a letter from Lowell saying he married Hardwick, Flannery settles into a life of concentrated writing.

Words on the screen reveal that she lived fourteen years longer, before dying from the "French wolf", lupus. The final words on the screen, post-credits, are her thanks to pigs for their pituitary glands needed for her lupus injections.

Cast

- [Maya Hawke](#) as [Flannery O'Connor](#)
- [Laura Linney](#) as Regina
- [Philip Ettinger](#) as [Cal Lowell](#)
- [Rafael Casal](#) as O.E. Parker
- [Cooper Hoffman](#) as Manley Pointer
- [Steve Zahn](#)
- [Vincent D'Onofrio](#)
- [Alessandro Nivola](#)
- Christine Dye
- [Willa Fitzgerald](#)
- [Levon Hawke](#)
- [Liam Neeson](#) as a priest (uncredited cameo)

Production

Wildcat was written by [Ethan Hawke](#) and [Shelby Gaines](#) and directed by Hawke. The film was produced and fully financed by Renovo Media Group's Cory Pyke. Joe Goodman of Good Country Pictures, Hawke and wife Ryan Hawke of Under the Influence Productions also produced.^[3] [Maya Hawke](#) executive produced and has a main role in the film. In January 2023, it was reported that [Laura Linney](#), [Philip Ettinger](#), [Rafael Casal](#), [Steve Zahn](#), [Cooper Hoffman](#), [Willa Fitzgerald](#), [Alessandro Nivola](#), and [Vincent D'Onofrio](#) joined the cast.^[4]

Principal photography took place in [Louisville, Kentucky](#) from January 10 to February 11, 2023.^{[4][5]} Filming also took place in [Shelbyville](#) and [Frankfort](#) of central Kentucky.^{[6][7]}

Release

Production companies	<div>Renovo Media Group</div> <div>Good Country Pictures</div> <div>Under the Influence Productions</div>
Distributed by	Oscilloscope Laboratories
Release dates	<div>September 1, 2023</div> <div>(Telluride)</div> <div>May 3, 2024</div>
Running time	105 minutes ^[1]
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	\$279,497 ^[2]

Wildcat's world premiere was held at the 50th Telluride Film Festival on September 1, 2023.^{[1][8]} It was also shown at the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival on September 11, 2023.^{[9][10]} In January 2024, Oscilloscope acquired US distribution rights to the film.^[11] It was released in limited theaters in New York and Los Angeles on May 3, 2024, with a wide release to follow.^[12]

Reception

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 46% of 35 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 4.9/10.^[13] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 53 out of 100, based on 13 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[14]

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External links

- *Wildcat* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt26442871/>) at IMDb
 - *Wildcat* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/wildcat_2023) at Rotten Tomatoes
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