

The Water Man (film)

The Water Man is a 2020 American documentary film directed by David Oyelowo, in his feature directorial debut, from a screenplay by Emma Needell. The film stars Oyelowo, Rosario Dawson, Lonnie Chavis, Amiah Miller, Alfred Molina and Maria Bello. Oprah Winfrey serves as an executive producer via her revived Harpo Films banner.

The Water Man had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 13, 2020, and was released in the United States on May 7, 2021, by RLJE Films.

Plot

Gunner Boone is 11 and has recently moved to Pine Mills, Oregon, a small, rural town. He spends his time working on a graphic novel about a detective investigating his own death, riding his bike, and visiting a nearby bookstore to borrow detective stories and books on cancer, as his mom Mary has leukemia. As they just moved to town, he has no friends yet. Gunner's escapism comes from deep within. Gunner's father Amos is a Marine, rarely at home. When he is around, he cannot connect well with Gunner, and accidentally destroys a painting that Gunner made of Detective Knox while attempting to get Gunner to play football with him.

Gunner comes across a local legend about the ghostly being The Water Man. Local kids pay blue-haired Jo, a grifter who claims she has seen him, indicating a scar on her neck from him as proof. Gunner, a fan of mysteries, tracks down an undertaker who thinks The Water Man may have the secret to immortality. Gunner then pays Jo to take him to the ridge where she saw The Water Man. Carrying food and supplies for the journey, they venture into the forest.

Their quest has a fairytale feel (the bookstore Gunner visits is called Once Upon a Time). Like Hansel and Gretel, he and Jo are neglected by their fathers, and explore on their own, creating a world together. The woods are full of curious things: strange sounds far off, wild horse stampedes, shiny, dark rocks hung along the way (like bread crumbs) through the forest, a river of beetles, and at one moment it seems to snow, although it's July. The children have no idea there is a

The Water Man



Promotional poster

Directed by	David Oyelowo
Written by	Emma Needell
Produced by	David Oyelowo <div> <div>Carla Gardini</div> <div>Shivani Rawat</div> <div>Monica Levinson</div> </div>
Starring	David Oyelowo <div> <div>Rosario Dawson</div> <div>Lonnie Chavis</div> <div>Amiah Miller</div> <div>Alfred Molina</div> <div>Maria Bello</div> </div>
Cinematography	Matthew J. Lloyd
Edited by	Blu Murray
Music by	Peter Baert
Production companies	ShivHans Pictures <div> <div>Harpo Films</div> <div>Yoruba Saxon Productions</div> </div>

raging forest fire on the other side of the ridge, and they are moving towards it. On their journey, they disagree, solve problems, and bond.

Gunner's sketch and comic books "come to life" as he wishes himself into a magical world where a watery immortal being may save his mother. They help us see through Gunner's eyes.

In the end credits we see the finished version of Gunner's graphic novel.

Cast

- [David Oyelowo](#) as Amos Boone
- [Rosario Dawson](#) as Mary Boone
- [Lonnie Chavis](#) as Gunner Boone
- [Amiah Miller](#) as Josephine Riley
- [Alfred Molina](#) as Jim Bussey
- [Maria Bello](#) as Sheriff Goodwin
- [Jessica Oyelowo](#) as Mrs Bakemeyer
- Kenny Powell as Drowned Man

Distributed by	RLJE Films (United States) Netflix (International) ^[1]
Release dates	September 13, 2020 (TIFF) ^[2] May 7, 2021 (United States)
Running time	92 minutes ^[3]
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	\$383,234 ^{[4][5]}

Production

In June 2015, it was announced [David Oyelowo](#) would direct and produce the film, from a screenplay by Emma Needell, with [Oprah Winfrey](#) set to executive produce the film under her [Harpo Films](#) banner, with [Walt Disney Studios](#) distributing.^[6] Oyelowo originally intended to simply star in and produce the film, but after the original director dropped out Needell convinced him to make his directorial debut on the project.^[7] In March 2019, it was announced [Rosario Dawson](#), [Lonnie Chavis](#), [Amiah Miller](#), [Alfred Molina](#), and [Maria Bello](#) had joined the cast of the film, with Disney no longer attached to distribute.^[8] Oyelowo said he reached out to [Angelina Jolie](#), [Nate Parker](#), [Joel Edgerton](#), and [Mel Gibson](#) about acting in films they directed.^[7] The score is by [Peter Baert](#).^[9] The film is dedicated to Victoria Oyelowo, the director's late mother.^[10]

Release

The film had its world premiere at the [Toronto International Film Festival](#) on September 13, 2020.^[11] In February 2021, [RLJE Films](#) acquired U.S. distribution rights to the film, and set it for a May 7, 2021, release, with [Netflix](#) set to distribute internationally. It was then released on Netflix on July 13.^[1]

Reception

On Rotten Tomatoes, the film has an approval rating of 78% based on 73 reviews, with an average rating of 6.6/10.^[12] According to Metacritic, which sampled 21 critics and calculated a weighted average score of 68 out of 100, the film received "generally favorable reviews".^[13]

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External links

- *The Water Man* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4779326/>) at *IMDb*
 - *The Water Man* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_water_man) at *Rotten Tomatoes*
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