

# Werewolves Within (film)

***Werewolves Within*** is a 2021 American mystery comedy horror film directed by Josh Ruben from a screenplay by Mishna Wolff, based on the video game of the same name from Red Storm Entertainment. It stars Sam Richardson, Milana Vayntrub, George Basil, Sarah Burns, Michael Chernus, Catherine Curtin, Wayne Duvall, Harvey Guillén, Rebecca Henderson, Cheyenne Jackson, Michaela Watkins, and Glenn Fleshler, and follows a group of people in a small Vermont town who get trapped in a snowstorm only to suspect one of them is a werewolf.

Plans for a *Werewolves Within* film adaptation began in October 2018, with Wolff writing the script and Ubisoft Motion Pictures producing it. The cast was announced in early 2020 and principal photography began in February 2020.

*Werewolves Within* had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival on June 16, 2021, and began a limited theatrical release in the United States on June 25, 2021, followed by video on demand on July 2, by IFC Films. The film received generally positive reviews from critics for its screenplay, characters, and humor. It holds the highest-rated critic scores on Rotten Tomatoes and Metacritic for a film based on a video game.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Plot

Forest ranger Finn Wheeler is assigned to cover Beaverfield, a small town where the residents are divided over a pipeline proposed by businessman Sam Parker. Upon arriving, Finn befriends mail carrier Cecily Moore while also meeting Trisha Anderson and her unfaithful husband Pete, wealthy couple Devon and Joaquim Wolfson, blue-collar workers Gwen and Marcus, and isolationist Emerson Flint. That night, a blizzard knocks out all power in Beaverfield, forcing the residents to take refuge in a lodge owned by Jeanine Sherman. The power outage occurs right before Trisha's dog is killed by an unknown assailant, which increases tensions in the town. Further conflict arises when Finn discovers that all of Beaverfield's generators were sabotaged and the body of Jeanine's missing husband Dave is underneath the lodge's porch.

The residents attempt to barricade themselves in the lodge for safety, but Pete has his hand bitten off by the same unknown assailant. Environmentalist Dr. Jane Ellis, an opponent of the

### Werewolves Within



Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Josh Ruben</u>
<b>Written by</b>	<u>Mishna Wolff</u>
<b>Based on</b>	<u>Werewolves Within</u> by <u>Red Storm Entertainment</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Sam Richardson</u> Jason Altman Margaret Boykin Andrew Lieberman Natalie Metzger Matt Miller Benjamin Wiessner
<b>Starring</b>	Sam Richardson <u>Milana Vayntrub</u>

pipeline, concludes that the assailant is a werewolf who is one of the lodge's current inhabitants. After announcing her findings, Dr. Ellis dies in front of Parker under ambiguous circumstances; Parker claims she committed suicide.

Those remaining in the lodge initially consider staying together to force the assailant out of hiding, but ultimately all but Finn and Cecily leave for their homes. However, with tensions having reached a boiling point in Beaverfield, the residents begin to kill each other out of self-interests. After nearly all the townsfolk are killed, Finn is attacked by Parker, who accuses Finn of being the werewolf because he worked in locations where previous attacks occurred. Finn counters that there is no werewolf and Parker intentionally caused the paranoia gripping Beaverfield in order to have his proposed pipeline approved. Parker gains the upper hand against Finn, but a dying Joaquim manages to kill him.

While Finn and Cecily recuperate in the town's bar, Finn learns that Dave was Beaverfield's previous mail carrier after finding undelivered packages in the back room and Dave's name tag. He then realizes Cecily is the werewolf. Confronted by Finn, Cecily acknowledges she turned the residents against each other to make feasting on them easier and she is too lazy to hunt wild animals for food. She subsequently attempts to kill Finn in her werewolf form, but Finn defeats her with the help of Emerson. Still alive, Cecily makes a final effort to attack Finn and Emerson before Jeanine finishes her off with a crossbow, avenging her husband.

## Cast

- [Sam Richardson](#) as Finn Wheeler
- [Milana Vayntrub](#) as Cecily Moore
- [George Basil](#) as Marcus
- [Sarah Burns](#) as Gwen
- [Michael Chernus](#) as Pete Anderton
- [Catherine Curtin](#) as Jeanine Sherman
- [Wayne Duvall](#) as Sam Parker
- [Harvey Guillén](#) as Joaquim Wolfson
- [Rebecca Henderson](#) as Dr. Jane Ellis
- [Cheyenne Jackson](#) as Devon Wolfson
- [Michaela Watkins](#) as Trisha Anderton
- [Glenn Fleshler](#) as Emerson Flint
- Patrick M. Walsh Jr. as Dave Sherman
- Anni Krueger as Charlotte

## Production

	<div><a href="#">George Basil</a></div> <div><a href="#">Sarah Burns</a></div> <div><a href="#">Michael Chernus</a></div> <div><a href="#">Catherine Curtin</a></div> <div><a href="#">Wayne Duvall</a></div> <div><a href="#">Harvey Guillén</a></div> <div><a href="#">Rebecca Henderson</a></div> <div><a href="#">Cheyenne Jackson</a></div> <div><a href="#">Michaela Watkins</a></div> <div><a href="#">Glenn Fleshler</a></div>
<b>Cinematography</b>	Matthew Wise
<b>Edited by</b>	Brett W. Bachman
<b>Music by</b>	Anna Drubich
<b>Production companies</b>	<div><a href="#">Ubisoft Film &amp; Television</a></div> <div>Vanishing Angle</div>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<a href="#">IFC Films</a>
<b>Release dates</b>	<div>June 16, 2021</div> <div><a href="#">(Tribeca)</a></div> <div>June 25, 2021</div> <div><a href="#">(United States)</a></div>
<b>Running time</b>	97 minutes
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Budget</b>	\$6.5 million <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Box office</b>	\$991,898 <sup>[2]</sup>

In October 2018, it was announced *Werewolves Within* was being developed as a feature film, with Mishna Wolff set to write the screenplay for the film, while Ubisoft Motion Pictures would produce.<sup>[4]</sup> Director Josh Ruben joined after his first feature film, *Scare Me* (2020), attracted the attention of Ubisoft, who provided him with "a V.R. thing to play [the game]", he said.<sup>[5]</sup> In January 2020, it was announced Sam Richardson had joined the cast of the film and would serve as a producer, with Josh Ruben to direct.<sup>[6]</sup> In February 2020, Michael Chernus, Michaela Watkins, Cheyenne Jackson, Milana Vayntrub, George Basil, Sarah Burns, Catherine Curtin, Wayne Duvall, Harvey Guillén, and Rebecca Henderson joined the cast of the film.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

Principal photography began on February 3, 2020.<sup>[9][10]</sup> While the video game is set in a medieval village, the film is set in the modern day and was shot in New York State's Hudson Valley, near the town of Woodstock.<sup>[5]</sup> Locations included Main Street in Phoenicia, New York, and The Phoenicia Belle bed-and-breakfast,<sup>[11]</sup> as well as Cooper Lake,<sup>[9]</sup> and The Golden Notebook bookstore in Woodstock.<sup>[9]</sup> The historic Fleischmanns Yeast family estate, now the retreat center, Spillian, in Fleischmanns, New York, served as the Beaverfield Inn, and as production headquarters.<sup>[12]</sup>

Ruben said the film's low budget prevented it from being able to afford to license the U.S. Postal Service logo, resulting in cast-member Milana Vayntrub playing a postal worker for the "'National Mail Service' or something." He also explained that the cast's wardrobe was deliberately exaggerated: "I wanted the wardrobes to look like they might get turned into action figures. Someday, someone may want to dress up as these characters for Halloween."<sup>[5]</sup>

## Release

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After IFC Films acquired distribution rights to the film, *Werewolves Within* had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in June 2021.<sup>[13]</sup> The film received a limited theatrical release in the United States on June 25, 2021, followed by video on demand on July 2, 2021.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Reception

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### Box office

The film grossed \$575,783 in the United States and Canada, and \$416,115 in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$991,898.<sup>[2]</sup>

In North America, *Werewolves Within* opened in 270 theaters in its opening weekend and grossed \$250,811. In its second weekend it made \$115,250 from 209 theaters; it was also the most-rented film on the iTunes Store's independent, horror, and comedy charts.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 86% based on 148 reviews, with an average rating of 6.9/10. The website's critics consensus reads, "*Werewolves Within* is the rare horror comedy that offers equal helpings of either genre – and adds up to a whole lot of fun in the bargain."<sup>[16]</sup> Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 66 out of 100, based on 17 critic reviews, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.<sup>[17]</sup> It is the highest-rated film based on a video game.<sup>[18][19]</sup>

*Variety* said that "despite all the severed, bloody body parts ... *Werewolves Within* is more playfully thrilling than scary in tone" and that the screenwriter "fashions all her characters with memorable attributes and plenty of social observations, yielding a compelling range of suspects none of which you can write off entirely."<sup>[20]</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* called it "[b]oth funny and snappy," and that its "catchy concept is made even more entertaining by a cast of accomplished comic actors." But, it said, there was "an overall lack of urgency or danger, related to the comedic tone. Because the characters are a bit silly, it's hard to become too invested in whether or not they get disemboweled."<sup>[21]</sup>

Calling the film "*Clue* with werewolves", *The A.V. Club* said Ruben's "sensibilities shine lunar bright through the way the film privileges collisions of personality in contained spaces over creature-feature thrills."<sup>[22]</sup>

## See also

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- List of films based on video games

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## External links

- [Official website](https://www.ifcfilms.com/films/werewolves-within) (<https://www.ifcfilms.com/films/werewolves-within>)
  - *Werewolves Within* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9288692/>) at *IMDb*
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