

# The Killer (2023 film)

***The Killer*** is a 2023 American action thriller film<sup>[3]</sup> directed by David Fincher from a screenplay by Andrew Kevin Walker. It is based on the French graphic novel series *The Killer* written by Alexis "Matz" Nolent and illustrated by Luc Jacamon.<sup>[5]</sup> The film stars Michael Fassbender alongside Arliss Howard, Charles Parnell, Kerry O'Malley, Sala Baker, Sophie Charlotte, and Tilda Swinton in supporting roles. Fassbender plays an assassin who embarks on an international vendetta after a hit goes wrong.

Development on the graphic novel adaptation began in 2007 at Paramount Pictures and Plan B Entertainment, with Fincher signed on as director and Alessandro Camon as screenwriter. In 2021, Fincher later moved the project over to Netflix with Andrew Kevin Walker replacing Camon as writer.

*The Killer* premiered at the 80th Venice International Film Festival on September 3, 2023.<sup>[6]</sup> It received a limited theatrical release on October 27, 2023; it began streaming on Netflix on November 10, 2023. The film received positive reviews from critics.

## Plot

A professional assassin known only as The Killer stakes out a Parisian hotel room. He prepares to use a sniper rifle to kill a target who will check into the hotel room at an unknown time. While waiting for the target, he eats, practices yoga, listens to music, and talks on the phone with his handler, an attorney, and his former university law professor, Edward "Eddie" Hodges. The target arrives with a dominatrix and The Killer shoots but misses, accidentally shooting the dominatrix. He flees, evading the police and disposing of his equipment. He then flies to the United States.

The Killer returns to his hideout in the Dominican Republic to find it has been broken into and his girlfriend Magdala has been attacked. She is in the ICU of a hospital, with her brother watching over her. He says that Magdala was interrogated and tortured by two assassins but managed to injure one of them and escape. The Killer tracks down Leo, the taxi driver who drove the assassins to The Killer's home. Leo identifies one of

<i>The Killer</i>	
<span></span> <div>Release poster</div>	
Directed by	<span><span>David Fincher</span></span>
Screenplay by	<span><span>Andrew Kevin Walker</span></span>
Based on	<span><i>The Killer</i> by <span><span>Alexis "Matz" Nolent</span></span><span> </span>and<span> </span><span><span>Luc Jacamon</span></span></span>
Produced by	<span><span>William Doyle</span></span> <span> </span> and <span> </span> <span><span>Peter Mavromates</span></span> <span> </span> and <span> </span> <span><span>Ceán Chaffin</span></span>
Starring	<span><span>Michael Fassbender</span></span> <span> </span> and <span> </span> <span><span>Arliss Howard</span></span> <span> </span> and <span> </span> <span><span>Charles Parnell</span></span> <span> </span> and <span> </span> <span><span>Kerry O'Malley</span></span> <span> </span> and <span> </span> <span><span>Sala Baker</span></span> <span> </span> and <span> </span> <span><span>Sophie Charlotte</span></span> <span> </span> and <span> </span> <span><span>Tilda Swinton</span></span>
Cinematography	<span><span>Erik Messerschmidt</span></span>
Edited by	<span><span>Kirk Baxter</span></span>

the assassins, a strong man with a limp leg, nicknamed "The Brute", and a woman who resembles a Q-Tip, known as "The Expert". The Killer shoots Leo and seeks to track down the two assassins.

The Killer travels to Hodges' office in New Orleans, Louisiana, and enters the building disguised as a custodian. After forcing Dolores, Hodges' secretary, to restrain her boss and herself, The Killer destroys their electronics. As Hodges attempts to get The Killer to leave, The Killer shoots him in the chest with a nail gun to torture the names of the hitmen out of him. However, Hodges doesn't reveal the information and dies quicker than The Killer anticipated. Dolores offers to show The Killer the assassins' identities in her paper files in her home, asking in return that The Killer give her a non-suspicious death so her children can claim a life insurance payout. After receiving the names at her home, The Killer breaks his rule not to show empathy; he snaps her neck and shoves her down a flight of stairs, making her death look like an accident. He then disposes of Hodges' body.

The Killer drives to St. Petersburg, Florida, where he confronts The Brute, whom he identifies by his limp. At night, he breaks into The Brute's home to kill him, but he is blindsided and tackled. A fight ensues, during which The Brute realizes who the Killer is before the Killer shoots him and sets his house on fire with a Molotov cocktail.

The Killer travels to Beacon, New York, and confronts The Expert "Q-Tip" assassin in a gourmet restaurant. Appearing to accept her fate, The Expert offers to share with him a "last supper" of whiskey, during which she questions The Killer's motivations. They leave the restaurant and go to a park, and after The Expert appears to slip down a small flight of ice-covered stairs, The Expert asks The Killer to help her up, but The Killer shoots her, revealing that she was concealing a knife.

The Killer travels to Chicago, to kill billionaire venture capitalist Henderson "Clay" Claybourne, reflecting during his flight that police take more interest in the deaths of rich people. He uses tools bought on Amazon to enter his penthouse. Confronting him, The Killer remains mostly silent. Claybourne says that he has no personal problem with The Killer and, as a first-time client of a hitman, agreed to pay Hodges for "the trail to be scrubbed". The Killer spares Claybourne, but he promises him a slow death if Claybourne ever targets him again. The Killer returns to the Dominican Republic and sits next to a recovering Magdala.

<b>Music by</b>	<u>Trent Reznor</u> <u>Atticus Ross</u>
<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Netflix Studios</u> <sup>[1]</sup> <u>Plan B</u> <u>Entertainment</u> <sup>[2]</sup> <u>Boom! Studios</u> <sup>[2]</sup> <u>Panic Pictures (II)</u> <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Netflix</u>
<b>Release dates</b>	September 3, 2023 ( <u>Venice</u> )  October 27, 2023 (United States)  November 10, 2023 (Netflix)
<b>Running time</b>	118 minutes <sup>[3]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Box office</b>	\$452,208 <sup>[4]</sup>

## Cast

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- Michael Fassbender as The Killer, a professional assassin
- Tilda Swinton as The Expert, a fellow assassin living in New York
- Charles Parnell as The Lawyer, Hodges, The Killer's handler posing as a lawyer
- Arless Howard as The Client, Claybourne, a billionaire businessman
- Kerry O'Malley as Dolores, an office administrator working for Hodges
- Sophie Charlotte as Magdala, The Killer's girlfriend
- Emiliano Pernía as Marcus, Magdala's brother

- [Gabriel Polanco](#) as Leo, the taxi driver
- [Sala Baker](#) as The Brute, an assassin who lives in Florida
- [Monique Ganderton](#) as The Dominatrix
- [Daran Norris](#) as Deep South Lounge greeter
- [Jack Kesy](#) as Salesman

## Production

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### Development

In November 2007, it was reported that [David Fincher](#) would be directing an adaptation of the [Matz](#) French comic book *The Killer*, with [Allesandro Camon](#) writing the script, [Brad Pitt's Plan B Entertainment](#) producing, and [Paramount Pictures](#) distributing.<sup>[7]</sup> By February 2021, Fincher had taken the project to Netflix, where he had signed an overall deal, with [Andrew Kevin Walker](#) now writing the script and [Michael Fassbender](#) circling the lead role.<sup>[5]</sup> By June, it was reported that Fincher was planning to begin filming in November 2021 in Paris, with cinematographer [Erik Messerschmidt](#).<sup>[8]</sup> [Tilda Swinton](#) joined the cast in October.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Filming

[Principal photography](#) began in November 2021 in Paris.<sup>[10]</sup> It continued in the Dominican Republic in December 2021, then moved to New Orleans later that month. It moved again to Chicago in February 2022,<sup>[11]</sup> and then to [St. Charles, Illinois](#) (doubling for the city of Beacon, New York), in March 2022 for ten days, wrapping up later that month.<sup>[12][13]</sup>

## Music

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In February 2023, it was reported that [Trent Reznor](#) and [Atticus Ross](#) were composing for the film.<sup>[14]</sup> The film also includes songs from English rock band [the Smiths](#).<sup>[15]</sup>

## Release

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*The Killer* premiered in-competition at the [80th Venice International Film Festival](#) on September 3, 2023.<sup>[6]</sup> It was picked up for a surprise screening at the [71st San Sebastián International Film Festival](#) set for September 30, 2023.<sup>[16]</sup> It was also screened at the [28th Busan International Film Festival](#) in the "Icon" section on October 6, 2023.<sup>[17]</sup>



The film's creative team at its UK Premiere at the 2023 [BFI London Film Festival](#).

The film began a limited theatrical release on October 27, 2023, via Netflix, before streaming on the platform on November 10, 2023.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Reception

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### Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 86% of 284 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 7.4/10. The website's consensus reads: "*The Killer* finds director David Fincher on firm footing with a stylish and engaging thriller that proves a perfect match for leading man Michael Fassbender."<sup>[19]</sup> Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 73 out of 100, based on 58 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.<sup>[20]</sup>

Terming it a "horribly addictive samurai procedural," Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian wrote that the film is "entertainingly absurd and yet the pure conviction and deadpan focus that Fassbender and Fincher bring to this ballet of anonymous professionalism makes it very enjoyable."<sup>[21]</sup> IndieWire's Ryan Lattanzio found it "as unfeeling as any Fincher thriller, at once predictable in its simplicity but also strangely daring because of it".<sup>[22]</sup> Time magazine's Stephanie Zacharek, noting the proliferation of thrillers about contract assassins, praised Fincher for simplifying his entry into the subgenre to its essence, which Zacharek felt expanded its possibilities rather than limiting them, especially with Fassbender's performance effectively realizing them.<sup>[23]</sup>

The New York Times was less positive, with Manohla Dargis unmoved by character and plot but nonetheless impressed by the talents of Fincher and Fassbender. "The character is boring and so is this movie, but like the supremely skilled Fincher, who can't help but make images that hold your gaze even as your mind wanders, Fassbender does keep you watching."<sup>[24]</sup>

The film has drawn comparisons to the 1967 film *Le Samouraï*.<sup>[25][26][27]</sup>

Accolades

Year	Award / Film Festival	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
<u>Venice International Film Festival</u>	<u>September 9, 2023</u>	<u>Golden Lion</u>	<u>David Fincher</u>	Nominated	[28]
		<u>Premio Soundtrack Stars Award — Special Mention</u>	<u>Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross</u>	Won	[29]
<u>Hollywood Music in Media Awards</u>	<u>November 15, 2023</u>	<u>Original Score — Feature Film</u>		Nominated	[30]
<u>Las Vegas Film Critics Society</u>	<u>December 13, 2023</u>	<u>Best Picture</u>	<i>The Killer</i>	Nominated	[31]
		<u>Best Score</u>	Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross	Nominated	
		<u>Best Stunts</u>	<i>The Killer</i>	Nominated	
<u>Indiana Film Journalists Association</u>	<u>December 17, 2023</u>	<u>Best Film</u>		Longlisted	[32] [33]
		<u>Best Director</u>	<u>David Fincher</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Editing</u>	<u>Kirk Baxter</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Cinematography</u>	<u>Erik Messerschmidt</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Musical Score</u>	Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross	Nominated	
<u>Golden Reel Awards</u>	<u>March 3, 2024</u>	<u>Outstanding Achievement in Sound Editing – Feature Effects / Foley</u>	Ren Klyce, Jonathon Stevens, Malcolm Fife, Jeremy Molod, Thom Brennan, Dee Selby, Shelley Roden, John Roesch	Nominated	[34]
<u>Critics' Choice Super Awards</u>	<u>April 4, 2024</u>	<u>Best Actor in a Superhero Movie</u>	<u>Michael Fassbender</u>	Won	[35]

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## External links

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- *The Killer* (<https://www.netflix.com/title/80234448>) on Netflix
  - *The Killer* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1136617/>) at IMDb
  - *The Killer* ([https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the\\_killer\\_2023](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_killer_2023)) on Rotten Tomatoes
- 

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