

# [***Men In Red States Push Civil War To Better-Than-Expected Opening: What We Know About The Controversial Film***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BST-3J41-JBCM-F00R-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Mary Whitfill Roeloffs, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** The "Civil War" movie stars Stephen McKinley Hendersen, Kirsten Dunst, Nick Offerman, Jesse Plemons, Wagner Moura and Cailee Spaeny.

**Body**

**Topline**

The hotly anticipated and controversial film "Civil War" made $25.7 million in its opening weekend after scoring impressive numbers in Thursdaypreviews, pushing the film to become the best-performing on an opening weekend for production company A24, spurred largely by men and moviegoers in Southern states.

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L-R: Actors Kirsten Dunst, Wagner Moura and Cailee Spaeny on the set of the film "Civil War."

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Civil War unseated blockbuster favorite "Godzilla X Kong: The New Empire at the top of the weekend box office chart, scored thebiggest-ever openingfor A24 and and could go on to break the record for the company s most successful film in the domestic market, according toBox Office Pro,a title currently held by Oscar-winning film Everything, Everywhere, All at Once."

The audience for the film skewed heavily toward men, which made up 73% of movie-goers, according to theHollywood Reporter, andDeadlinereported that smaller Red-state markets like El Paso, Texas, Oklahoma City and Charlottesville, Virginia, were particularly hot for the release.

"Civil War" has been a topic of controversy as writer-director Alex Garland brings to life his vision of a divided America that sees California and Texas join together to rebel against the federal government.

The film, a cautionary tale about the extreme and rising polarization and political violence in the United States, depicts a nation dissolved into citizen v. citizen combat, complete with depictions of torture and suicide bombings that have been called "shocking," "terrifying" and "chilling by reviewers.

Kirsten Dunst, Wagner Moura and Cailee Spaeny star as journalists traveling to Washington D.C. to chronicle the war, and is meant to depict the importance of the press in a divided time: I want to make a film about journalists where journalists are the heroes, Garland told theNew York Times.

The film does not dive into the details of the ***politics*** at play in the civil war, why California and Texas have banded together (a pairing that wasimmediately criticizedas unrealistic) or define the conflict as one between liberal and conservatives, according to the Times.

**Crucial Quote**

"What kind of American are you? actor Jesse Plemons, who plays a sadistic soldier in the Civil War film, asks in the movie's trailer.

**Big Number**

83%. That's the critics score of "Civil War" onRotten Tomatoes.Peter Travers ofABC Newscalled the film "the most original and propulsively exciting movie of the year so far." Huffington Post criticCandice Frederickcontrarily said the film only serves to "kick up a lot of dust around controversial topics without actually examining or even adequately portraying any of them.

**What To Watch For**

How the movie continues to perform. "Civil War" opened in 3,395 theaters on Friday and so far has a domestic gross of $25.7 million, more than $50 million less than the $77.1 million earned by "Everything, Everywhere" in its theatrical run in 2022.

**Key Background**

The 2024 box office has suffered under poor expectations brought by last year's Hollywood strikes, fewer films slated for release and "waning moviegoer sentiment." Last year's box office, spurred by the mega success of films like "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," was the best performance seen since the start of the pandemic with$9 billiondomestically.Studio executiveshave said they expect the 2024 box office to only reach about $8 billion, largely because of the delay of several high-dollar films due to actors and writers strikes last year. Analytics firm Gower Street this week predicted theater revenues will hit $32.3 billion worldwide, according to theHollywood Reporter, down from last year's earnings of $33.9 billion. So far, thebest domestically performingfilm of the year is "Dune: Part Two," pushed from a 2023 release due to the strikes, with a $267.1 million gross. Kung Fu Panda 4" is in the No. 2 spot with $167.6 million and "Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire" is third with $140 million.

**Further Reading**

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