

= Fight Club =

Fight Club is a 1999 American neo @-@ noir drama film based on the 1996 novel of the same name by Chuck Palahniuk . The film was directed by David Fincher , and stars Brad Pitt , Edward Norton and Helena Bonham Carter . Norton plays the unnamed protagonist , an " everyman " who is discontented with his white @-@ collar job . He forms a " fight club " with soap maker Tyler Durden , played by Pitt , and they are joined by men who also want to fight recreationally . The narrator becomes embroiled in a relationship with Durden and a dissolute woman , Marla Singer , played by Bonham Carter .

Palahniuk 's novel was optioned by 20th Century Fox producer Laura Ziskin , who hired Jim Uhls to write the film adaptation . Fincher was one of four directors the producers considered , and was selected because of his enthusiasm for the film . Fincher developed the script with Uhls and sought screenwriting advice from the cast and others in the film industry . The director and the cast compared the film to Rebel Without a Cause (1955) and The Graduate (1967) . Fincher intended Fight Club 's violence to serve as a metaphor for the conflict between a generation of young people and the value system of advertising . The director copied the homoerotic overtones from Palahniuk 's novel to make audiences uncomfortable and keep them from anticipating the twist ending .

Studio executives did not like the film and restructured Fincher 's intended marketing campaign to try to reduce anticipated losses . Fight Club failed to meet the studio 's expectations at the box office and received polarized reactions from critics , who debated the explicit violence and moral ambiguity , but praised the acting , directing , themes and messages . It was cited as one of the most controversial and talked @-@ about films of 1999 . The film later found critical and commercial success with its DVD release , which established Fight Club as a cult film .

= = Plot = =

The unnamed narrator (Edward Norton) is a traveling automobile recall specialist who suffers from insomnia . One night , he visits a support group for testicular cancer victims , where they assume that he , too , is a victim , and he spontaneously weeps into the nurturing arms of another man , finding a " freedom " that euphorically relieves his insomnia . He becomes addicted to participating in support groups of various kinds , always allowing the groups to assume that he suffers what they do . However , he begins to notice another impostor , Marla Singer (Helena Bonham Carter) , whose presence disturbs his bliss . The two negotiate to avoid their attending the same groups , but , before going their separate ways , Marla gives the narrator her phone number .

On a flight home from a business trip , the narrator meets Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt) , a soap salesman with whom he begins to converse after noticing the two share the same kind of briefcase . After the flight , the narrator returns home to find that his apartment has been demolished by an explosion . He calls Tyler and they meet at a bar . A conversation about consumerism leads to the narrator moving into Tyler 's dilapidated mansion . Outside the bar , Tyler requests that the narrator hit him , which leads the two to engage in a fistfight . They have further fights outside the bar on subsequent nights , and these fights attract growing crowds of men . The fighting eventually moves to the bar 's basement where the men form a " fight club , " a routine opportunity for the men to fight recreationally .

Marla overdoses on pills and telephones the narrator for help ; he ignores her , but Tyler answers the call and saves her . Tyler and Marla become sexually involved , and Tyler warns the narrator never to talk to Marla about him . More fight clubs form across the country and , under Tyler 's leadership , they become the anti @-@ materialist and anti @-@ corporate organization called " Project Mayhem . " The narrator complains to Tyler that he wants to be more involved in the organization , but then Tyler suddenly disappears . When a member of Project Mayhem is killed by the police during a botched sabotage operation , the narrator tries to shut down the project , and follows evidence of Tyler 's national travels to track him down . In one city , a Project member greets the narrator as Tyler Durden . The narrator calls Marla from his hotel room and discovers that Marla also believes him to be Tyler . He suddenly sees Tyler in his room , and Tyler reveals that they are

dissociated personalities in the same body . When the narrator has believed himself to be asleep , Tyler has been controlling his body and travelling to different locations .

The narrator blacks out after the conversation , and when he awakes , he uncovers Tyler 's plans to erase debt by destroying buildings that contain credit card companies ' records . The narrator tries to contact the police , but finds that the officers are members of the Project . He attempts to disarm the explosives in a building , but Tyler subdues him and moves him to the uppermost floor . The narrator , held at gunpoint by Tyler , realizes that , in sharing the same body with Tyler , he himself is actually holding the gun . He fires it into his mouth , shooting through the cheek without killing himself . Tyler collapses with an exit wound to the back of his head , and the narrator stops mentally projecting him . Afterward , Project Mayhem members bring a kidnapped Marla to him , believing him to be Tyler , and leave them alone . The explosives detonate , collapsing many buildings around them ; the narrator and Marla , holding hands , look on .

= = Themes = =

Fincher said *Fight Club* was a coming of age film , like the 1967 film *The Graduate* but for people in their 30s . Fincher described the narrator as an " everyman " ; the character is identified in the script as " Jack " , but left unnamed in the film . Fincher outlined the narrator 's background : " He 's tried to do everything he was taught to do , tried to fit into the world by becoming the thing he isn 't . " The narrator cannot find happiness , so he travels on a path to enlightenment in which he must " kill " his parents , his god , and his teacher . At the start of the film , he has killed his parents . With Tyler Durden , he kills his god by doing things they are not supposed to do . To complete the process of maturing , the narrator has to kill his teacher , Tyler Durden .

The character is a 1990s inverse of *The Graduate* archetype : " a guy who does not have a world of possibilities in front of him , he has no possibilities , he literally cannot imagine a way to change his life . " He is confused and enraged , so he responds to his environment by creating Tyler Durden , a Nietzschean Übermensch , in his mind . While Tyler is who the narrator would want to be , he is not empathetic and does not help the narrator face decisions in his life " that are complicated and have moral and ethical implications " . Fincher explained , " [Tyler] can deal with the concepts of our lives in an idealistic fashion , but it doesn 't have anything to do with the compromises of real life as modern man knows it . Which is : You 're not really necessary to a lot of what 's going on . It 's built , it just needs to run now . " While studio executives worried that *Fight Club* was going to be " sinister and seditious " , Fincher sought to make it " funny and seditious " by including humor to temper the sinister element .

Uhls described the film as a " romantic comedy " , explaining , " It has to do with the characters ' attitudes toward a healthy relationship , which is a lot of behavior which seems unhealthy and harsh to each other , but in fact does work for them ? because both characters are out on the edge psychologically . " The narrator seeks intimacy , but he avoids it with Marla Singer , seeing too much of himself in her . While Marla is a seductive and negativist prospect for the narrator , he instead embraces the novelty and excitement that comes with befriending Tyler Durden . The narrator is comfortable being personally connected to Tyler Durden , but he becomes jealous when Tyler becomes sexually involved with Marla . When the narrator argues with Tyler about their friendship , Tyler tells him that being friends is secondary to pursuing the philosophy they have been exploring . Tyler also suggests doing something about Marla , implying that she is a risk to be removed . When Tyler says this , the narrator realizes that his desires should have been focused on Marla and begins to diverge from Tyler 's path .

The unreliable narrator is not immediately aware that Tyler Durden originated in him and is being mentally projected . He also mistakenly promotes the fight clubs as a way to feel powerful , though the narrator 's physical condition worsens while Tyler Durden 's appearance improves . While Tyler desires " real experiences " of actual fights like the narrator at first , he manifests a nihilistic attitude of rejecting and destroying institutions and value systems . His impulsive nature , representing the id , conveys an attitude that is seductive and liberating to the narrator and the members of Project Mayhem . Tyler 's initiatives and methods become dehumanizing ; he orders around the members of

Project Mayhem with a megaphone similar to camp directors at Chinese re @-@ education camps . The narrator pulls back from Tyler and in the end , he arrives at a middle ground between his two conflicting selves .

Norton said , " I feel that Fight Club really , in a way ... probed into the despair and paralysis that people feel in the face of having inherited this value system out of advertising . " Pitt said , " Fight Club is a metaphor for the need to push through the walls we put around ourselves and just go for it , so for the first time we can experience the pain . " Fight Club also parallels the 1955 film Rebel Without a Cause ; both probe the frustrations of the people that live in the system . The characters , having undergone societal emasculation , are reduced to " a generation of spectators " . A culture of advertising defines society 's " external signifiers of happiness " , causing an unnecessary chase for material goods that replaces the more essential pursuit of spiritual happiness . The film references Calvin Klein , IKEA , and the Volkswagen New Beetle . Norton said of the Beetle , " We smash it ... because it seemed like the classic example of a Baby Boomer generation marketing plan that sold culture back to us . " His character also walks through his apartment while visual effects identify his many IKEA possessions . Fincher described the narrator 's immersion , " It was just the idea of living in this fraudulent idea of happiness . " Pitt explained the dissonance , " I think there 's a self @-@ defense mechanism that keeps my generation from having any real honest connection or commitment with our true feelings . We 're rooting for ball teams , but we 're not getting in there to play . We 're so concerned with failure and success ? like these two things are all that 's going to sum you up at the end . "

The violence of the fight clubs serves not to promote or glorify physical combat , but for participants to experience feeling in a society where they are otherwise numb . The fights tangibly represent a resistance to the impulse to be " cocooned " in society . Norton believed that the fighting between the men strips away the " fear of pain " and " the reliance on material signifiers of their self @-@ worth " , leaving them to experience something valuable . When the fights evolve into revolutionary violence , the film only half @-@ accepts the revolutionary dialectic by Tyler Durden ; the narrator pulls back and rejects Durden 's ideas . Fight Club purposely shapes an ambiguous message , the interpretation of which is left to the audience . Fincher elaborated , " I love this idea that you can have fascism without offering any direction or solution . Isn 't the point of fascism to say , ' This is the way we should be going ' ? But this movie couldn 't be further from offering any kind of solution . "

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The novel Fight Club by Chuck Palahniuk was published in 1996 . Before its publication , a 20th Century Fox book scout sent a galley proof of the novel to creative executive Kevin McCormick . The executive assigned a studio reader to review the proof as a candidate for a film adaptation , but the reader discouraged it . McCormick then forwarded the proof to producers Lawrence Bender and Art Linson , who also rejected it . Producers Josh Donen and Ross Bell saw potential and expressed interest . They arranged unpaid screen readings with actors to determine the script 's length , and an initial reading lasted six hours . The producers cut out sections to reduce the running time , and they used the shorter script to record its dialogue . Bell sent the recording to Laura Ziskin , head of the division Fox 2000 , who listened to the tape and purchased the rights to Fight Club from Palahniuk for \$ 10 @,@ 000 .

Ziskin initially considered hiring Buck Henry to write the adaptation , finding Fight Club similar to the 1967 film The Graduate , which Henry had adapted . When a new screenwriter , Jim Uhls , lobbied Donen and Bell for the job , the producers chose him over Henry . Bell contacted four directors to direct the film . He considered Peter Jackson the best choice , but Jackson was too busy filming the 1996 film The Frighteners in New Zealand . Bryan Singer received the book but did not read it . Danny Boyle met with Bell and read the book , but he pursued another film . David Fincher , who had read Fight Club and had tried to buy the rights himself , talked with Ziskin about directing the

film . He hesitated to accept the assignment with 20th Century Fox at first because he had an unpleasant experience directing the 1992 film *Alien 3* for the studio . To repair his relationship with the studio , he met with Ziskin and studio head Bill Mechanic . In August 1997 , 20th Century Fox announced that Fincher would direct the film adaptation of *Fight Club* .

= = = Casting = = =

Producer Ross Bell met with actor Russell Crowe to discuss his candidacy for the role of Tyler Durden . Producer Art Linson , who joined the project late , met with Pitt regarding the same role . Linson was the senior producer of the two , so the studio sought to cast Pitt instead of Crowe . Pitt was looking for a new film after the failure (in the US market) of his 1998 film *Meet Joe Black* , and the studio believed *Fight Club* would be more commercially successful with a major star . The studio signed Pitt and offered him a US \$ 17 @ . @ 5 million salary .

For the role of the unnamed narrator , the studio desired a " sexier marquee name " like Matt Damon to increase the film 's commercial prospects ; it also considered Sean Penn . Fincher instead considered Norton a candidate for the role , based on the actor 's performance in the 1996 film *The People vs. Larry Flynt* . Other studios were approaching Norton for leading roles in developing films like *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *Man on the Moon* . The actor was cast in *Runaway Jury* , but the film did not reach production . 20th Century Fox offered Norton a \$ 2 @ . @ 5 million salary to attract him to *Fight Club* . Norton could not accept the offer immediately because he still owed Paramount Pictures a film ; he had signed a contractual obligation with Paramount to appear in one of the studio 's future films for a smaller salary (Norton later satisfied the obligation with his role in the 2003 film *The Italian Job*) .

In January 1998 , 20th Century Fox announced that Pitt and Norton were cast in the film . The actors prepared for their roles by taking lessons in boxing , taekwondo , grappling , and soapmaking . Pitt voluntarily visited a dentist to have pieces of his front teeth chipped off so his character would not have perfect teeth . The pieces were restored after filming concluded .

Fincher 's first choice for the role of Marla Singer was Janeane Garofalo , who objected to the film 's sexual content . The filmmakers considered Courtney Love and Winona Ryder as candidates early on . The studio wanted to cast Reese Witherspoon , but Fincher objected that she was too young for the role . He chose to cast Bonham Carter based on her performance in the 1997 film *The Wings of the Dove* .

= = = Writing = = =

Uhls started working on an early draft of the adapted screenplay , which excluded a voice @ - @ over because the industry perceived at the time that the technique was " hackneyed and trite " . When Fincher joined the film , he thought that the film should have a voice @ - @ over , believing that the film 's humor came from the narrator 's voice . The director described the film without a voice @ - @ over as seemingly " sad and pathetic " . Fincher and Uhls revised the script for six to seven months and by 1997 had a third draft that reordered the story and left out several major elements . When Pitt was cast , he was concerned that his character , Tyler Durden , was too one @ - @ dimensional . Fincher sought the advice of writer @ - @ director Cameron Crowe , who suggested giving the character more ambiguity . Fincher also hired screenwriter Andrew Kevin Walker for assistance . The director invited Pitt and Norton to help revise the script , and the group drafted five revisions in the course of a year .

Palahniuk praised the faithful film adaptation of his novel and applauded how the film 's plot was more streamlined than the book 's . Palahniuk recalled how the writers debated if film audiences would believe the plot twist from the novel . Fincher supported including the twist , arguing , " If they accept everything up to this point , they 'll accept the plot twist . If they 're still in the theater , they 'll stay with it . " Palahniuk 's novel also contained homoerotic overtones , which the director included in the film to make audiences uncomfortable and accentuate the surprise of the film 's twists . The bathroom scene where Tyler Durden bathes next to the narrator is an example of the overtones ; the

line , " I 'm wondering if another woman is really the answer we need , " was meant to suggest personal responsibility rather than homosexuality . Another example is the scene at the beginning of the film in which Tyler Durden puts a gun barrel down the narrator 's mouth .

The narrator finds redemption at the end of the film by rejecting Tyler Durden 's dialectic , a path that diverged from the novel 's ending in which the narrator is placed in a mental institution . Norton drew parallels between redemption in the film and redemption in *The Graduate* , indicating that the protagonists of both films find a middle ground between two divisions of self . Fincher considered the novel too infatuated with Tyler Durden and changed the ending to move away from him : " I wanted people to love Tyler , but I also wanted them to be OK with his vanquishing . "

= = = Filming = = =

Studio executives Mechanic and Ziskin planned an initial budget of US \$ 23 million to finance the film , but by the start of production , the budget was increased to \$ 50 million . Half was paid by New Regency , but during filming , the projected budget escalated to US \$ 67 million . New Regency 's head and *Fight Club* executive producer Arnon Milchan petitioned Fincher to reduce costs by at least US \$ 5 million . The director refused , so Milchan threatened Mechanic that New Regency would withdraw financing . Mechanic sought to restore Milchan 's support by sending him tapes of dailies from *Fight Club* . After seeing three weeks of filming , Milchan reinstated New Regency 's financial backing . The final production budget was \$ 63 million .

The fight scenes were heavily choreographed , but the actors were required to " go full out " to capture realistic effects like having the wind knocked out of them . Makeup artist Julie Pearce , who worked for the director on the 1997 film *The Game* , studied mixed martial arts and pay @-@ per @-@ view boxing to portray the fighters accurately . She designed an extra 's ear to have cartilage missing , citing as inspiration the boxing match in which Mike Tyson bit off part of Evander Holyfield 's ear . Makeup artists devised two methods to create sweat on cue : spraying mineral water over a coat of Vaseline , and using the unadulterated water for " wet sweat " . Meat Loaf , who plays a member of the fight club who has " bitch tits " , wore a 90 @-@ pound (40 kg) fat harness that gave him large breasts for the role . He also wore eight @-@ inch (20 cm) lifts in his scenes with Norton to be taller than him .

Filming lasted 138 days , during which Fincher shot more than 1 @,@ 500 rolls of film , three times the average for a Hollywood film . The locations were in and around Los Angeles , including most notably : The Promenade Towers , Melrose Avenue , St. Brendan 's Catholic Church , and Michael Heizer 's public art sculpture " North , South East , West " . Sets were also built in Century City . Production designer Alex McDowell constructed more than 70 sets . The exterior of Tyler Durden 's house was built in Wilmington , California , while the interior was built on a sound stage at the studio 's location . The interior was given a decayed look to illustrate the deconstructed world of the characters . Marla Singer 's apartment was based on photographs of the Rosalind Apartments in downtown LA . Overall production included 300 scenes , 200 locations , and complex special effects . Fincher compared *Fight Club* to his succeeding and less complex film *Panic Room* , " I felt like I was spending all my time watching trucks being loaded and unloaded so I could shoot three lines of dialogue . There was far too much transportation going on . "

= = = Cinematography = = =

Fincher used the Super 35 format to film *Fight Club* since it gave him maximum flexibility in composing shots . He hired Jeff Cronenweth as cinematographer ; Cronenweth 's father Jordan Cronenweth was the cinematographer who worked for Fincher on the 1992 film *Alien 3* but left midway through its production due to Parkinson 's disease . Fincher explored visual styles in his previous films *Seven* and *The Game* , and he and Cronenweth drew elements from these styles for *Fight Club* .

They applied a lurid style , choosing to make people " sort of shiny " . The appearance of the narrator 's scenes without Tyler Durden were bland and realistic . The scenes with Tyler were

described by Fincher as " more hyper @-@ real in a torn @-@ down , deconstructed sense ? a visual metaphor of what [the narrator is] heading into " . The filmmakers used heavily desaturated colors in the costuming , makeup , and art direction . Bonham Carter wore opalescent makeup to portray her romantic nihilistic character with a " smack @-@ fiend patina " . Fincher and Cronenweth drew influences from the 1973 film American Graffiti , which applied a mundane look to nighttime exteriors while simultaneously including a variety of colors .

The crew took advantage of both natural and practical light at filming locations . The director sought various approaches to the lighting setups , for example choosing several urban locations for the city lights ' effects on the shots ' backgrounds . He and the crew also embraced fluorescent lighting at other practical locations to maintain an element of reality and to light the prostheses depicting the characters ' injuries . On the other hand , Fincher also ensured that scenes were not so strongly lit so the characters ' eyes were less visible , citing cinematographer Gordon Willis ' technique as the influence .

Fight Club was filmed mostly at night and Fincher purposely filmed the daytime shots in shadowed locations . The crew equipped the bar 's basement with inexpensive work lamps to create a background glow . Fincher avoided stylish camerawork when filming early fight scenes in the basement and instead placed the camera in a fixed position . In later fight scenes , Fincher moved the camera from the viewpoint of a distant observer to that of the fighter .

The scenes with Tyler Durden were staged to conceal that the character was a mental projection of the unnamed narrator . The character was not filmed in two shots with a group of people , nor was he shown in any over the shoulder shots in scenes where Tyler gives the narrator specific ideas to manipulate him . In scenes before the narrator meets Tyler , the filmmakers inserted Tyler 's presence in single frames for subliminal effect . Tyler appears in the background and out of focus , like a " little devil on the shoulder " . Fincher explained the subliminal frames : " Our hero is creating Tyler Durden in his own mind , so at this point he exists only on the periphery of the narrator 's consciousness . "

While Cronenweth generally rated and exposed the Kodak film stock normally on Fight Club , several other techniques were applied to change its appearance . Flashing was implemented on much of the exterior night photography , the contrast was stretched to be purposely ugly , the print was adjusted to be underexposed , Technicolor 's ENR silver retention was used on a select number of prints to increase the density of the film 's blacks , and high @-@ contrast print stocks were chosen to create a " stepped @-@ on " look on the print with a dirty patina .

= = = Visual effects = = =

Fincher hired visual effects supervisor Kevin Tod Haug , who worked for him on The Game , to create visual effects for Fight Club . Haug assigned the visual effects artists and experts to different facilities that each addressed different types of visual effects : CG modeling , animation , compositing , and scanning . Haug explained , " We selected the best people for each aspect of the effects work , then coordinated their efforts . In this way , we never had to play to a facility 's weakness . " Fincher visualized the narrator 's perspective through a " mind 's eye " view and structured a myopic framework for the film audiences . Fincher also used previsualized footage of challenging main @-@ unit and visual effects shots as a problem @-@ solving tool to avoid making mistakes during the actual filming .

The film 's title sequence is a 90 @-@ second visual effects composition that depicts the inside of the narrator 's brain at a microscopic level ; the camera pulls back to the outside , starting at his fear center and following the thought processes initiated by his fear impulse . The sequence , designed in part by Fincher , was budgeted separately from the rest of the film at first , but the sequence was awarded by the studio in January 1999 . Fincher hired Digital Domain and its visual effects supervisor Kevin Mack , who won an Academy Award for Visual Effects for the 1998 film What Dreams May Come , for the sequence . The company mapped the computer @-@ generated brain using an L @-@ system , and the design was detailed using renderings by medical illustrator Katherine Jones . The pullback sequence from within the brain to the outside of the skull included

neurons , action potentials , and a hair follicle . Haug explained the artistic license that Fincher took with the shot , " While he wanted to keep the brain passage looking like electron microscope photography , that look had to be coupled with the feel of a night dive ? wet , scary , and with a low depth of field . " The shallow depth of field was accomplished with the ray tracing process .

Other visual effects include an early scene in which the camera flashes past city streets to survey Project Mayhem 's destructive equipment lying in underground parking lots ; the sequence was a three @-@ dimensional composition of nearly 100 photographs of Los Angeles and Century City by photographer Michael Douglas Middleton . The final scene of the demolition of the credit card office buildings was designed by Richard Baily of Image Savant ; Baily worked on the scene for over fourteen months .

Midway through the film , Tyler Durden points out the cue mark ? nicknamed " cigarette burn " in the film ? to the audience . The scene represents a turning point that foreshadows the coming rupture and inversion of the " fairly subjective reality " that existed earlier in the film . The director explained , " Suddenly it 's as though the projectionist missed the changeover , the viewers have to start looking at the movie in a whole new way . "

= = = Musical score = = =

Fincher was concerned that bands experienced in writing film scores would be unable to tie the movie 's themes together , so he sought a band which had never recorded for film . He pursued Radiohead , but ultimately chose the breakbeat producing duo Dust Brothers to score the film . The duo created a post @-@ modern score that included drum loops , electronic scratches , and computerized samples . Dust Brothers performer Michael Simpson explained the setup : " Fincher wanted to break new ground with everything about the movie , and a nontraditional score helped achieve that . " The film 's climax and end credits feature the song " Where Is My Mind ? " by the Pixies .

= = Release = =

= = = Marketing = = =

Filming concluded in December 1998 , and Fincher edited the footage in early 1999 to prepare Fight Club for a screening with senior executives . They did not receive the film positively and were concerned that there would not be an audience for the film . Executive producer Art Linson , who supported the film , recalled the response : " So many incidences of Fight Club were alarming , no group of executives could narrow them down . " Nevertheless , Fight Club was originally slated to be released in July 1999 but was later changed to August 6 , 1999 . The studio further delayed the film 's release , this time to autumn , citing a crowded summer schedule and a hurried post @-@ production process . Outsiders attributed the delays to the Columbine High School massacre earlier in the year .

Marketing executives at 20th Century Fox faced difficulties in marketing Fight Club and at one point considered marketing it as an art film . They considered that the film was primarily geared toward male audiences because of its violence and believed that not even Pitt would attract female filmgoers . Research testing showed that the film appealed to teenagers . Fincher refused to let the posters and trailers focus on Pitt and encouraged the studio to hire the advertising firm Wieden + Kennedy to devise a marketing plan . The firm proposed a bar of pink soap with the title " Fight Club " embossed on it as the film 's main marketing image ; the proposal was considered " a bad joke " by Fox executives . Fincher also released two early trailers in the form of fake public service announcements presented by Pitt and Norton ; the studio did not think the trailers marketed the film appropriately . Instead , the studio financed a \$ 20 million large @-@ scale campaign to provide a press junket , posters , billboards , and trailers for TV that highlighted the film 's fight scenes . The studio advertised Fight Club on cable during World Wrestling Entertainment broadcasts , which

Fincher protested , believing that the placement created the wrong context for the film . Linson believed that the " ill @-@ conceived one @-@ dimensional " marketing by marketing executive Robert Harper largely contributed to Fight Club 's lukewarm box office performance in the United States .

= = = Theatrical run = = =

The studio held Fight Club 's world premiere at the 56th Venice International Film Festival on September 10 , 1999 . For the American theatrical release , the studio hired the National Research Group to test screen the film ; the group predicted the film would gross between US \$ 13 million and US \$ 15 million in its opening weekend . Fight Club opened commercially in the United States and Canada on October 15 , 1999 and earned US \$ 11 @,@ 035 @,@ 485 in 1 @,@ 963 theaters over the opening weekend . The film ranked first at the weekend box office , defeating Double Jeopardy and The Story of Us , a fellow weekend opener . The gender mix of audiences for Fight Club , argued to be " the ultimate anti @-@ date flick " , was 61 % male and 39 % female ; 58 % of audiences were below the age of 21 . Despite the film 's top placement , its opening gross fell short of the studio 's expectations . Over the second weekend , Fight Club dropped 42 @.@ 6 % in revenue , earning US \$ 6 @,@ 335 @,@ 870 . Against its production budget of US \$ 63 million , the film grossed US \$ 37 million from its theatrical run in the United States and Canada and earned US \$ 100 @.@ 9 million in theaters worldwide . The underwhelming North American performance of Fight Club soured the relationship between 20th Century Fox 's studio head Bill Mechanic and media executive Rupert Murdoch , which contributed to Mechanic 's resignation in June 2000 .

The British Board of Film Classification reviewed Fight Club for its November 12 , 1999 release in the United Kingdom and removed two scenes involving " an indulgence in the excitement of beating a (defenseless) man 's face into a pulp " . The board assigned the film an 18 certificate , limiting the release to adult @-@ only audiences in the UK . The BBFC did not censor any further , considering and dismissing claims that Fight Club contained " dangerously instructive information " and could " encourage anti @-@ social (behavior) " . The board decided , " The film as a whole is ? quite clearly ? critical and sharply parodic of the amateur fascism which in part it portrays . Its central theme of male machismo (and the anti @-@ social behaviour that flows from it) is emphatically rejected by the central character in the concluding reels . " The scenes were restored in a two @-@ disc DVD edition released in the UK in March 2007 .

= = = Home media = = =

Fincher supervised the composition of the DVD packaging and was one of the first directors to participate in a film 's transition to home media . The film was released in two DVD editions . The single @-@ disc edition included a commentary track , while the two @-@ disc special edition included the commentary track , behind @-@ the @-@ scenes clips , deleted scenes , trailers , fake public service announcements , the promotional music video " This is Your Life " , Internet spots , still galleries , cast biographies , storyboards , and publicity materials . The director worked on the DVD as a way to finish his vision for the film . Julie Markell , 20th Century Fox 's senior vice president of creative development , said the DVD packaging complemented the director 's vision : " The film is meant to make you question . The package , by extension , tries to reflect an experience that you must experience for yourself . The more you look at it , the more you 'll get out of it . " The studio developed the packaging for two months . The two @-@ disc special edition DVD was packaged to look covered in brown cardboard wrapper . The title " Fight Club " was labeled diagonally across the front , and packaging appeared tied with twine . Markell said , " We wanted the package to be simple on the outside , so that there would be a dichotomy between the simplicity of brown paper wrapping and the intensity and chaos of what 's inside . " Deborah Mitchell , 20th Century Fox 's vice president of marketing , described the design : " From a retail standpoint , [the DVD case] has incredible shelf @-@ presence . "

Fight Club won the 2000 Online Film Critics Society Awards for Best DVD , Best DVD Commentary

, and Best DVD Special Features . Entertainment Weekly ranked the film 's two @-@ disc edition in first place on its 2001 list of " The 50 Essential DVDs " , giving top ratings to the DVD 's content and technical picture @-@ and @-@ audio quality . When the two @-@ disc edition went out of print , the studio re @-@ released it in 2004 because of fans ' requests . The film sold more than 6 million copies on DVD and video within the first ten years , making it one of the largest @-@ selling home media items in the studio 's history , in addition to grossing over \$ 55 million in video and DVD rentals . With a weak box office performance in the United States and Canada , a better performance in other territories , and the highly successful DVD release , Fight Club generated a US \$ 10 million profit for the studio .

The Laserdisc edition was only released in Japan on May 26 , 2000 and features a different cover art , as well as one of the very few Dolby EX soundtracks released on LD .

The VHS edition was released on October 31 , 2000 , as a part of 20th Century Fox 's " Premiere Series " line . It includes a featurette after the film , entitled " Behind the Brawl " .

Fight Club was released in the Blu @-@ ray Disc format in the United States on November 17 , 2009 . Fox Creative chose Neuron Syndicate to design the art for the format 's packaging , and Neuron commissioned five graffiti artists to create 30 pieces of art . The art encompasses urban aesthetics found on the East Coast and West Coast of the United States as well as influences from European street art . The Blu @-@ ray edition opens with a menu screen for the romantic comedy Never Been Kissed starring Drew Barrymore before leading into the actual Fight Club menu screen . David Fincher got permission from Barrymore to include the fake menu screen .

= = Critical reception = =

When Fight Club premiered at the 56th Venice International Film Festival , the film was fiercely debated by critics . A newspaper reported , " Many loved and hated it in equal measures . " Some critics expressed concern that the film would incite copycat behavior , such as that seen after A Clockwork Orange debuted in Britain nearly three decades previously . Upon the film 's theatrical release , The Times reported the reaction : " It touched a nerve in the male psyche that was debated in newspapers across the world . " Although the film 's makers called Fight Club " an accurate portrayal of men in the 1990s , " some critics called it " irresponsible and appalling " . Writing for the Australian newspaper , Christopher Goodwin stated : " Fight Club is shaping up to be the most contentious mainstream Hollywood meditation on violence since Stanley Kubrick 's A Clockwork Orange . "

Janet Maslin , reviewing for The New York Times , praised Fincher 's direction and editing of the film . She wrote that Fight Club carried a message of " contemporary manhood " , and that , if not watched closely , the film could be misconstrued as an endorsement of violence and nihilism . Roger Ebert , reviewing for the Chicago Sun @-@ Times , called Fight Club " visceral and hard @-@ edged " , and " a thrill ride masquerading as philosophy " that most audiences would not appreciate . Ebert later acknowledged that the film was " beloved by most , not by me " . He was later requested to have a shot @-@ by @-@ shot analysis of Fight Club at the Conference on World Affairs ; he stated that " [s] eeing it over the course of a week , I admired its skill even more , and its thought even less . " Jay Carr of The Boston Globe opined that the film began with an " invigoratingly nervy and imaginative buzz " , but that it eventually became " explosively silly " . Newsweek 's David Ansen described Fight Club as " an outrageous mixture of brilliant technique , puerile philosophizing , trenchant satire and sensory overload " and thought that the ending was too pretentious . Richard Schickel of Time described the director 's mise en scène as dark and damp : " It enforces the contrast between the sterilities of his characters ' aboveground life and their underground one . Water , even when it 's polluted , is the source of life ; blood , even when it 's carelessly spilled , is the symbol of life being fully lived . To put his point simply : it 's better to be wet than dry . " Schickel applauded the performances of Brad Pitt and Edward Norton , but he criticized the film 's " conventionally gimmicky " unfolding and the failure to make Helena Bonham Carter 's character interesting .

Cineaste 's Gary Crowduis reviewed the critical reception in retrospect : " Many critics praised Fight

Club , hailing it as one of the most exciting , original , and thought @-@ provoking films of the year . " He wrote of the negative opinion , " While Fight Club had numerous critical champions , the film 's critical attackers were far more vocal , a negative chorus which became hysterical about what they felt to be the excessively graphic scenes of fisticuffs ... They felt such scenes served only as a mindless glamorization of brutality , a morally irresponsible portrayal , which they feared might encourage impressionable young male viewers to set up their own real @-@ life fight clubs in order to beat each other senseless . "

Fight Club was nominated for the 2000 Academy Award for Best Sound Editing , but it lost to The Matrix . Bonham Carter won the 2000 Empire Award for Best British Actress . The Online Film Critics Society also nominated Fight Club for Best Film , Best Director , Best Actor (Norton) , Best Editing , and Best Adapted Screenplay (Uhls) . Though the film won none of the awards , the organization listed Fight Club as one of the top ten films of 1999 . The soundtrack was nominated for a BRIT Award , losing to Notting Hill .

On Rotten Tomatoes , Fight Club holds a rating of 79 % , based on 162 reviews , with an average rating of 7 @.@ 3 / 10 . The site 's consensus reads , " Solid acting , amazing direction , and elaborate production design make Fight Club a wild ride . " On Metacritic , the film has a score of 66 out of 100 , based on 35 critics , indicating " generally favorable reviews " .

= = Cultural impact = =

Fight Club was one of the most controversial and talked @-@ about films of the 1990s . Like other films released that year , including Magnolia , Being John Malkovich and Three Kings , Fight Club was recognized as an innovator in cinematic form and style since it exploited new developments in filmmaking technology . After Fight Club 's theatrical release , it became more popular via word of mouth , and the positive reception of the DVD established it as a cult film that David Ansen of Newsweek conjectured would enjoy " perennial " fame . The film 's success also heightened Palahniuk 's profile to global renown .

Following Fight Club 's release , several fight clubs were reported to have started in the United States . A " Gentleman 's Fight Club " was started in Menlo Park , California in 2000 and had members mostly from the tech industry . Teens and preteens in Texas , New Jersey , Washington state , and Alaska also initiated fight clubs and posted videos of their fights online , leading authorities to break up the clubs . In 2006 , an unwilling participant from a local high school was injured at a fight club in Arlington , Texas , and the DVD sales of the fight led to the arrest of six teenagers . An unsanctioned fight club was also started at Princeton University , where matches were held on campus . The film was suspected of influencing Luke Helder , a college student who planted pipe bombs in mailboxes in 2002 . Helder 's goal was to create a smiley pattern on the map of the United States , similar to the scene in Fight Club in which a building is vandalized to have a smiley on its exterior . On July 16 , 2009 , a 17 @-@ year @-@ old who had formed his own fight club in Manhattan was charged with detonating a homemade bomb outside a Starbucks Coffee shop in the Upper East Side . The New York City Police Department reported the suspect was trying to emulate " Project Mayhem " . In September , 2015 , two employees at Lightbridge Academy , a New Jersey day care center , were charged with instigating " Fight Club @-@ style " brawls between children (aged four to six years of age) . The fights were reportedly filmed and uploaded to Snapchat , a video messaging application , and involved approximately a " dozen boys and girls " . In the videos , one of the perpetrators , Erica Kenny , can be heard making references to Fight Club . The charges stem from an incident that occurred on August 13 , 2015 , but investigators are looking into whether the fights were ongoing .

In 2003 , Fight Club was listed as one of the " 50 Best Guy Movies of All Time " by Men 's Journal . In 2006 and 2008 , Fight Club was voted by Empire readers as the eighth and tenth greatest film of all time , respectively . Total Film ranked Fight Club as " The Greatest Film of our Lifetime " in 2007 during the magazine 's tenth anniversary . In 2007 , Premiere selected Tyler Durden 's line , " The first rule of fight club is you do not talk about fight club , " as the 27th greatest movie line of all time . In 2008 , readers of Empire ranked Tyler Durden first on a list of the 100 Greatest Movie Characters

. Empire also identified Fight Club as the 10th greatest movie of all time in its 2008 issue The 500 Greatest Movies of All Time .

In 2010 , two viral mash @-@ up videos featuring Fight Club were released . Ferris Club was a mash @-@ up of Fight Club and the film Ferris Bueller 's Day Off . It portrayed Ferris as Tyler Durden and Cameron as the narrator , " claiming to see the real psychological truth behind the John Hughes classic " . The second video Jane Austen 's Fight Club also gained popularity online as a mash @-@ up of Fight Club 's fighting rules and the characters created by 19th century novelist Jane Austen .

= = = American Film Institute nominations = = =

AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Movie Quotes ? " First rule of Fight Club is ? you do not talk about Fight Club . "

AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Movies (10th Anniversary Edition)