

= Zodiac (film) =

Zodiac is a 2007 American mystery @-@ thriller film directed by David Fincher . The screenplay by James Vanderbilt is based on the 1986 non @-@ fiction book of the same name by Robert Graysmith . The film stars Jake Gyllenhaal , Mark Ruffalo , and Robert Downey , Jr . , with Anthony Edwards , Brian Cox , Elias Koteas , Donal Logue , John Carroll Lynch , Dermot Mulroney and Chloë Sevigny in supporting roles .

Zodiac tells the story of the manhunt for a notorious serial killer who called himself the " Zodiac " and killed in and around the San Francisco Bay Area during the late 1960s and early 1970s , leaving several victims in his wake and taunting police with letters , blood stained clothing , and ciphers mailed to newspapers . The cases remain one of Northern California 's most infamous unsolved crimes .

Fincher , Vanderbilt and producer Bradley J. Fischer spent 18 months conducting their own investigation and research into the Zodiac murders . Fincher employed the digital Thomson Viper Filmstream camera to photograph the film . However , Zodiac was not shot entirely digitally ; traditional high @-@ speed film cameras were used for slow @-@ motion murder sequences .

Reviews for Zodiac were very positive , lauding the film 's writing , directing , acting and historical authenticity . The film grossed over \$ 84 million worldwide against a production budget of \$ 65 million .

= = Plot = =

On July 4 , 1969 , an unknown man attacks Darlene Ferrin and Mike Mageau with a handgun , at a lovers ' lane in Vallejo , California . Mageau survives ; Ferrin dies .

One month later , the San Francisco Chronicle receives encrypted letters written by the killer calling himself the " Zodiac " and taunting the police . Political cartoonist Robert Graysmith is not taken seriously by crime reporter Paul Avery or the editors and is excluded from the initial details about the killings despite his interest in the case . When the newspaper publishes the letters , a married couple is able to decipher one . At a local bar , Avery initially makes fun of Graysmith before they discuss the coded letters . Graysmith interprets the letter , which Avery finds helpful , and Avery begins sharing information . The Zodiac killer attacks law student Bryan Hartnell and Cecelia Shepard at Lake Berryessa in Napa County on September 27 , 1969 . Shepard dies two days later , and Hartnell survives . One of Graysmith 's insights about the letters is that the Zodiac 's reference to man as " the most dangerous animal of them all " is a reference to the story and film The Most Dangerous Game (which features Count Zaroff as a man who hunts live human prey) . The fact that both Zaroff 's surname and the name " Zodiac " start with a " Z " also seems significant .

Two weeks later , San Francisco taxicab driver Paul Stine is shot and killed in the city 's Presidio Heights district immediately after dropping the killer off . The Zodiac killer mails pieces of Stine 's blood stained shirt to the Chronicle , along with a taunting letter . San Francisco police detectives Dave Toschi and his partner Bill Armstrong are assigned to the Stine case , and work closely with Vallejo 's Jack Mulanax and Detective Ken Narlow in Napa . The killer , or someone posing as him , continues to toy with authorities by sending more letters and speaks on the phone with lawyer Melvin Belli when he makes an appearance on a television talk show . Avery and Graysmith form an alliance , delving deeper into the case as time permits .

In 1971 , Detectives Toschi , Armstrong , and Mulanax question Arthur Leigh Allen , a suspect in the Vallejo case . Allen behaves suspiciously during the interview . They ask to see his watch and notice that he wears a Zodiac brand wristwatch which has the same logo used by the killer . However , a handwriting expert insists that Allen did not write the Zodiac letters , even though Allen is said to be ambidextrous . Avery receives a letter threatening his life ; becoming increasingly paranoid , he turns to drugs and alcohol . At one point , he shares information with the Riverside Police Department , angering both Toschi and Armstrong . The case 's notoriety weighs on Toschi , who is bothered when Graysmith shows up at the theater where Toschi is watching a Hollywood film , Dirty Harry , loosely based on the Zodiac case , with his wife .

In 1978 , Avery leaves the Chronicle , and moves to the Sacramento Bee . Graysmith persistently contacts Toschi about the Zodiac murders , and eventually impresses the veteran detective with his knowledge of the case . While Toschi cannot directly give Graysmith access to the evidence , he provides contact names of other police departments in other counties where Zodiac murders occurred . Armstrong transfers from the San Francisco Police homicide division , and Toschi is demoted for supposedly forging a Zodiac letter . Graysmith continues his own investigation , which is profiled in the Chronicle , and he allows himself to be interviewed on television about his book @-@ in @-@ progress concerning the case . He begins receiving anonymous phone calls with heavy breathing . Because of his immersion in the case , Graysmith loses his job and his wife Melanie leaves him , taking their children with her . Graysmith acquires more information that points to Allen as the Zodiac , and although circumstantial evidence seems to indicate his guilt , the physical evidence , such as fingerprints and handwriting samples , do not implicate him .

In December 1983 , Graysmith tracks Allen down to a Vallejo Ace Hardware store , where he is employed as a sales clerk . The men have a brief encounter before Graysmith leaves . Eight years later , victim Mike Mageau meets with authorities and identifies Allen from a police mugshot . As the authorities walk by an airport book store , copies of Graysmith 's book Zodiac are shown . Final title cards inform the audience that Allen died in 1992 before he could be questioned further . A DNA test performed in 2002 on an archived autopsy sample did not match a partial DNA sample gathered from the postage stamp on one of the Zodiac letters , but this does not rule him out as a suspect .

= = Cast = =

Jake Gyllenhaal as Robert Graysmith , a cartoonist for the San Francisco Chronicle . While researching the film , Fincher considered Gyllenhaal to play Graysmith . According to the director , " I really liked him in Donnie Darko and I thought , He ? s an interesting double @-@ sided coin . He can do that naive thing but he can also do possessed . " To prepare for his role , Gyllenhaal met Graysmith and videotaped him in order to study his mannerisms and behavior .

Mark Ruffalo as SFPD Inspector David Toschi . Initially , Ruffalo was not interested in the project but Fincher wanted him to play Toschi . He met with the actor and told him that he was rewriting the screenplay . " I loved what he was saying and loved where he was going with it , " the actor remembers . For research , he read every report on the case and read all the books on the subject . Ruffalo met Toschi and found out that he had " perfect recall of the details and what happened when , where , who was there , what he was wearing . He always knew what he was wearing . I think it is seared into who he is and it was a big deal for him . "

Robert Downey , Jr. as Paul Avery , a journalist at the San Francisco Chronicle who covered the Zodiac killer case .

Anthony Edwards as SFPD Inspector William Armstrong . When casting the role , Fincher said he thought of Edwards because " I knew I needed the most decent person I could find , because he would be the balance of the movie . In a weird way , this movie wouldn ? t exist without Bill Armstrong . Everything we know about the Zodiac case , we know because of his notes . So in casting the part , I wanted to get someone who is totally reliable . "

Brian Cox as Melvin Belli , a prominent defense attorney who received a letter from the Zodiac killer .

Elias Koteas as Sgt. Jack Mulanax , a police detective from Vallejo .

Donal Logue as Ken Narlow , a police detective in Napa .

John Carroll Lynch as Arthur Leigh Allen , a prime suspect in the case . Allen was never charged with these crimes .

Dermot Mulroney as Captain Marty Lee , Armstrong 's and Toschi 's supervisor in the SFPD homicide division .

Philip Baker Hall as Sherwood Morrill , a handwriting analyst . Baker Hall had previously appeared in the 2005 film The Zodiac .

Chloë Sevigny as Melanie Graysmith , Graysmith 's wife .

John Getz as Templeton Peck , Chronicle managing editor .

John Terry as Charles Thieriot , another editor at the Chronicle , who is involved with the first Zodiac letter .

Adam Goldberg as Duffy Jennings , a real life journalist who replaced Avery at the San Francisco Chronicle when the latter went to the San Francisco Examiner . He received a letter from the Zodiac in 1978 .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

James Vanderbilt had read Robert Graysmith 's book Zodiac in 1986 while in high school . Years later , after becoming a screenwriter , he got the opportunity to meet Graysmith , and became fascinated by the folklore surrounding the Zodiac Killer . He then decided to try to translate the story into a script . Vanderbilt had endured bad experiences in the past , in which the endings of his scripts had been changed , and wanted to have more control over the material this time . He pitched his adaptation of Zodiac to Mike Medavoy and Bradley J. Fischer from Phoenix Pictures , by agreeing to write a spec script if he could have more creative control over it .

Graysmith first met Fischer and Vanderbilt at the premiere of Paul Schrader 's film , Auto Focus , which was based on Graysmith 's 1991 book about the life and death of actor Bob Crane . A deal was made and they optioned the rights to Zodiac and Zodiac Unmasked when they became available after languishing at another studio for nearly a decade . David Fincher was their first choice to direct based on his work on Seven . Originally , he was going to direct an adaptation of James Ellroy 's novel , The Black Dahlia (later filmed by Brian De Palma) , and envisioned a five @-@ hour , \$ 80 million mini @-@ series with film stars . When that fell through , Fincher left that project and moved on to Zodiac .

Fincher was drawn to this story because he spent much of his childhood in San Anselmo in Marin County during the initial Zodiac murders . " I remember coming home and saying the highway patrol had been following our school buses for a couple weeks now . And my dad , who worked from home , and who was very dry , not one to soft @-@ pedal things , turned slowly in his chair and said : ' Oh yeah . There 's a serial killer who has killed four or five people , who calls himself Zodiac , who 's threatened to take a high @-@ powered rifle and shoot out the tires of a school bus , and then shoot the children as they come off the bus . ' " For Fincher as a young boy , the killer " was the ultimate boogeyman " . The director was also drawn to the unresolved ending of Vanderbilt 's screenplay because it felt true to real life , as cases are not always solved .

Fincher realized that his job was to dispel the mythic stature the case had taken on over the years by clearly defining what was fact and what was fiction . He told Vanderbilt that he wanted the screenplay re @-@ written but with additional research done from the original police reports . Fincher found that there was a lot of speculation and hearsay and wanted to interview people directly involved in the case in person to see if he believed what they were telling him . Fincher did this because he felt a burden of responsibility in making a film that convicted someone posthumously .

Fincher , Fischer and Vanderbilt spent months interviewing witnesses , family members of suspects , retired and current investigators , the only two surviving victims , and the mayors of San Francisco and Vallejo . Fincher said , " Even when we did our own interviews , we would talk to two people . One would confirm some aspects of it and another would deny it . Plus , so much time had passed , memories are affected and the different telling of the stories would change perception . So when there was any doubt we always went with the police reports " . During the course of their research , Fincher and Fischer hired Gerald McMenamin , an internationally known forensic linguistics expert and professor of linguistics at California State University Fresno , to analyze the Zodiac 's letters . Unlike document examiners in the 1970s , he focused on the language of the Zodiac and how he formed his sentences in terms of word structure and spelling .

Fincher and Fischer approached Metro @-@ Goldwyn @-@ Mayer to finance the film but talks with

them fell through because the studio wanted the running time fixed at two hours and fifteen minutes . They then approached other studios , and Warner Bros. and Paramount Pictures agreed to share the production costs and were willing to be more flexible about the running time . The film was a tough sell to the studios and the executives were concerned about the heavy amount of dialogue and the lack of action scenes , as well as the inconclusive nature of the story arc .

When Dave Toschi met Fincher , Fischer and Vanderbilt , the director told him that he was not going to make another Dirty Harry (which had been loosely based on the Zodiac case) . Toschi was impressed with their knowledge of the case and afterwards , he realized that he had learned a lot from them . In addition , the Zodiac 's two surviving victims , Mike Mageau and Bryan Hartnell were consultants on the film .

Alan J. Pakula 's film All the President 's Men was the template for Zodiac as Fincher felt that it was also " the story of a reporter determined to get the story at any cost and one who was new to being an investigative reporter . It was all about his obsession to know the truth " . And like in that film , he did not want to spend time telling the back story of any of the characters , focusing , instead , on what they did in regards to the case . "

Vanderbilt was drawn to the notion that Graysmith went from a cartoonist to one of the most significant investigators of the case . He pitched the story as : " What if Garry Trudeau woke up one morning and tried to solve the Son of Sam " ? As he worked on the script , he became friends with Graysmith . The filmmakers were able to get the cooperation of the Vallejo Police Department (one of the key investigators at the time) because they hoped that the film would inspire someone to come forward with a crucial bit of information that might help solve this decades @-@ old cold case .

= = = Casting = = =

While researching the film , Fincher considered Jake Gyllenhaal to play Robert Graysmith . According to the director , " I really liked him in Donnie Darko and I thought , ' He 's an interesting double @-@ sided coin . He can do that naive thing but he can also do possessed . ' " In preparation for his role Gyllenhaal met Graysmith , and videotaped him to study his mannerisms and behavior .

Initially , Mark Ruffalo was not interested in the project but Fincher wanted him to play David Toschi . He met with the actor and told him that he was rewriting the screenplay . " I loved what he was saying and loved where he was going with it " , the actor remembers . For research , he read every report on the case and read all the books on the subject . Ruffalo met Toschi and found out that he had " perfect recall of the details and what happened when , where , who was there , what he was wearing . He always knew what he was wearing . I think it is seared into who he is and it was a big deal for him . "

When casting the role of Inspector William Armstrong , Fincher said he thought of Anthony Edwards because " I knew I needed the most decent person I could find , because he would be the balance of the movie . In a weird way , this movie wouldn 't exist without Bill Armstrong . Everything we know about the Zodiac case , we know because of his notes . So in casting the part , I wanted to get someone who is totally reliable . "

Originally , Gary Oldman was to play Melvin Belli but " he went to a lot of trouble , they had appliances , but just physically it wasn 't going to work , he just didn 't have the girth " , Graysmith remembers . Brian Cox was cast instead .

The finished film has an unusually large cast of characters . In a May 15 , 2007 , film review , Variety noted , " Performances and casting are impeccable down to the smallest role . "

= = = Principal photography = = =

Fincher decided to use the digital Thomson Viper Filmstream camera to shoot the film . Fincher had previously used the Thomson Viper over the past three years on commercials for Nike , Hewlett Packard , Heineken and Lexus which allowed him to get used to and experiment with the equipment

. He was able to use inexpensive desktop software like Final Cut Pro to edit Zodiac . Fincher remarked in an interview , " Dailies almost always end up being disappointing , like the veil is pierced and you look at it for the first time and think , ' Oh my god , this is what I really have to work with . ' But when you can see what you have as it 's gathered , it can be a much less neurotic process . "

Zodiac was the first production to employ the Filmstream camera in its native Filmstream mode , which records an uncompressed video stream , allowing for exceptional quality .

Contrary to popular belief , Zodiac was not shot entirely digitally ; traditional high @-@ speed film cameras were used for slow @-@ motion murder sequences . Michael Mann 's Miami Vice , as well as his previous effort , Collateral (a co @-@ production of Paramount and its current sister studio DreamWorks , and which also starred Mark Ruffalo) , were also shot with the camera but mixed in other formats . Once shot on the Viper camera , the files were converted to DVCPro HD 1080i and edited in Final Cut Pro . This was for editorial decisions only . During the later stages of editing the original uncompressed 1080p 4 : 4 : 4 RAW digital source footage was assembled automatically to maintain an up @-@ to @-@ date digital " negative " of the film . Other digital productions like Superman Returns or Apocalypto recorded to the HDCAM tape format .

Fincher had previously worked with director of photography Harris Savides on Seven (he shot the opening credits) and The Game . Savides loved the script but realized , " there was so much exposition , just people talking on the phone or having conversations . It was difficult to imagine how it could be done in a visual way . " Fincher and Savides did not want to repeat the look of Seven . The director 's approach to Zodiac was to create a look mundane enough that audiences would accept that what they were watching was the truth . The filmmakers also did not want to glamorize the killer or tell the story through his eyes . " That would have turned the story into a first @-@ person @-@ shooter video game . We didn 't want to make the sort of movie that serial killers would want to own , " Fincher said .

Savides ' first experience with the Viper Filmstream camera was shooting a Motorola commercial with Fincher . From there , he used it on Zodiac . Fincher wanted to make sure that the camera was more inclined towards film production so that the studio would be more comfortable about using it on a project with large budget . To familiarize himself with the camera , he " did as many things ' wrong ' as I possibly could . I went against everything I was supposed to do with the camera . " Savides felt comfortable with the camera after discovering its limitations .

Fincher and Savides used the photographs of William Eggleston , Stephen Shore 's work from the early Seventies , and actual photos from the Zodiac police files . The two men worked hard to capture the look and feel of the period as Fincher admitted , " I suppose there could have been more VW bugs but I think what we show is a pretty good representation of the time . It is not technically perfect . There are some flaws but some are intended . " The San Francisco Chronicle was built in the old post office in the Terminal Annex Building in downtown Los Angeles . A building on nearby Spring Street subbed for the Hall of Justice and the San Francisco Police Department . Production began on September 12 , 2005 . The filmmakers shot for five weeks in the San Francisco Bay Area and the rest of the time in Los Angeles , bringing the film in under budget , wrapping in February 2006 . The film took 115 days to shoot .

Some of the cast was not happy with Fincher 's exacting ways and perfectionism . Some scenes required upwards of 70 takes . Gyllenhaal was frustrated by the director 's methods and commented in an interview , " You get a take , 5 takes , 10 takes . Some places , 90 takes . But there is a stopping point . There 's a point at which you go , ' That 's what we have to work with . ' But we would reshoot things . So there came a point where I would say , well , what do I do ? Where 's the risk ? " Downey said , " I just decided , aside from several times I wanted to garrote him , that I was going to give him what he wanted . I think I 'm a perfect person to work for him , because I understand gulags " . Fincher responded , " If an actor is going to let the role come to them , they can 't resent the fact that I 'm willing to wait as long as that takes . You know , the first day of production in San Francisco we shot 56 takes of Mark and Jake ? and it 's the 56th take that 's in the movie " . Ruffalo also backed up his director 's methods when he said , " The way I see it is , you enter into someone else 's world as an actor . You can put your expectations aside and have an

experience that 's new and pushes and changes you , or hold on to what you think it should be and have a stubborn , immovable journey that 's filled with disappointment and anger . "

= = = Visual effects = = =

Digital Domain handled the bulk of the film 's 200 + effects shots , including pools of blood and bloody fingerprints found at crime scenes . For the murder of Cecelia Shepard that took place at Lake Berryessa , blood seepage and clothing stains were added in post @-@ production . Fincher did not want to shoot the blood with practical effects because wiping everything down after every take would take too long so the murder sequences were done with CG blood .

CG was also used to recreate the San Francisco neighborhood at Washington and Cherry Streets where cab driver Paul Stine was killed . The area had changed significantly over the years and residents didn 't want the murder to be re @-@ created in their neighborhood , so Fincher shot the six @-@ minute sequence on a bluescreen stage . Production designer Donald Burt gave the visual effects team detailed drawings of the intersection as it was in 1969 . Photographs of every possible angle of the area were shot with a high @-@ resolution digital camera , allowing the effects crew to build computer @-@ based geometric models of homes that were then textured with period facades . 3 @-@ D vintage police motorcycles , squad cars , a firetruck and street lights were added to the final shot .

The film 's establishing shots of the Bay Area were created by Matte World Digital . The " helicopter shots " of the fireworks @-@ laden sky over Vallejo , the San Francisco waterfront , and the cab driving through San Francisco were CG , as was the shot looking down from the tower of the Golden Gate Bridge .

A time @-@ lapse sequence showing the building of the Transamerica Pyramid was a hybrid of 2D and 3D matte painting . The shot was initially created using reference photos of the Pyramid taken from the rooftop of Francis Ford Coppola 's Sentinel Building . MWD 's visual effects supervisor , Craig Barron , then researched the Pyramid 's original construction techniques for accuracy in the animated sequence .

The art for the Zodiac poster was also provided by Matte World Digital at Fincher 's request . Barron and his crew shot digital photos of the city skyline at night and composited them with a stock photo taken from the top of the Golden Gate Bridge . Layers of fog were added for the final image .

= = = Soundtrack = = =

Originally , Fincher envisioned the film 's soundtrack to be composed of 40 cues of vintage music spanning the nearly three decades of the Zodiac story . With music supervisor George Drakoulias , the director searched for the right pop songs that reflected the era , including Three Dog Night 's cover of " Easy to Be Hard " because " it 's so ingrained in my psyche as being what the summer of ' 69 sounded like in northern California " . Initially , Fincher did not envision an original score for the film , but rather a tapestry of sound design , vintage songs of the period , sound bites and clips of KFRC (an AM radio giant) and " Mathews Top of the Hill Daly City " (home of a prominent hi @-@ fi dealership of the time) . The director told the studio that he did not need a composer and would buy various songs instead . They agreed , but as the film developed , sound designer and longtime Fincher collaborator Ren Klyce felt there were places in some scenes that could have used music . So , he inserted music from two of his favorite soundtracks , David Shire 's scores for The Conversation and All the President 's Men . Fincher was eager to work with Shire as All the President 's Men was one of his favorite films and one of the primary cinematic influences on Zodiac . He reminded Klyce of the deal that he had made with the studio .

Klyce got in touch with sound and film editor Walter Murch who worked on The Conversation and he got Klyce in touch with Shire . Fincher sent the composer a copy of the script and flew him in for a meeting and a screening in L.A. At first , Fincher only wanted 15 ? 20 minutes of score and for it to be all based on solo piano . As Shire worked on it and incorporated textures of a Charles Ives piece called , " The Unanswered Question " and Conversation @-@ based cues , he found that he had 37

minutes of original music . The orchestra Shire assembled consisted of musicians from the San Francisco Opera and S.F. ballet . Shire said , " There are 12 signs of the Zodiac and there is a way of using atonal and tonal music . So we used 12 tones , never repeating any of them but manipulating them " . He used specific instruments to represent the characters : the trumpet for Toschi , the solo piano for Graysmith and the dissonant strings for the Zodiac killer .

= = Release = =

An early version of Zodiac ran three hours and eight minutes . It was supposed to be released in time for Academy Award consideration but Paramount felt that the film ran too long and asked Fincher to make changes . Contractually , he had final cut and once he reached a length he felt was right , the director refused to make any further cuts . To trim down the film to two hours and forty minutes , he had to cut a two @-@ minute blackout montage of " hit songs signaling the passage of time from Joni Mitchell to Donna Summer . " It was replaced with a title card that reads , " Four years later . " Another cut scene that test screening audiences did not like involved " three guys talking into a speakerphone " to get a search warrant as Toschi and Armstrong talk to SFPD Capt. Marty Lee (Dermot Mulroney) about their case against suspect Arthur Leigh Allen . Fincher said that this scene would probably be put back on the DVD .

To promote Zodiac , Paramount posted on light @-@ poles in major cities original sketches of the actual Zodiac killer with the words , " In theaters March 2nd , " at the bottom . The film was screened in competition at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival on May 17 , 2007 with Fincher and Gyllenhaal participating in a press conference afterwards . The director 's cut of Zodiac was given a rare screening at the Walter Reade Theater in New York City on November 19 , 2007 with Fincher being interviewed by film critic Kent Jones afterwards .

= = = Home media = = =

The DVD for Zodiac was released on July 24 , 2007 and is available widescreen or fullscreen , presented in anamorphic widescreen , and an English Dolby Digital 5 @.@ 1 Surround track . There are no extra materials included .

According to David Prior , producer of the subsequent two @-@ disc special edition , the initial bare bones edition " was only reluctantly agreed to by Fincher because I needed more time on the bonus material . The studio was locked into their release date , so Fincher allowed that version to be released first . It had nothing to do with Fincher ' double dipping his own movie before it even makes it to stores ' and everything to do with buying more time for the special edition " . He stated that the theatrical cut would only be available on the single @-@ disc edition . Prior elaborated further : " Nobody wants fans feeling like they 're being taken advantage of , and I know that double @-@ dipping creates that impression . That 's why it was so important to me that consumers be told there was another version coming . In this case it really was a rock @-@ and @-@ a @-@ hard @-@ place situation , and delaying the second release was done strictly for the benefit of the final product ... But this is a very ambitious project , easily the most far @-@ reaching I 've ever worked on , and owing largely to studio snafus that I can 't really elaborate on , I didn 't have enough time to do it properly . Thus Fincher bought me the extra time by agreeing to a staggered release , which I 'm very grateful for " . In its first week , rentals for the DVD earned \$ 6 @.@ 7 million .

The two @-@ disc director 's cut DVD and HD DVD were released on January 8 , 2008 , with its UK release on Blu @-@ ray and DVD announced for September 29 , 2008 . Disc 1 features , in addition to a longer cut of the film , an audio commentary by Fincher and a second by Gyllenhaal , Downey , Fischer , Vanderbilt , and Ellroy . Disc 2 includes a trailer , a " Zodiac Deciphered " documentary , a " Visual Effects of Zodiac " featurette , previsualization split @-@ screen comparisons for the Blue Rock Springs , Lake Berryessa , and San Francisco murder sequences , a " This is the Zodiac Speaking " featurette , and a " His Name Was Arthur Leigh Allen " featurette . Other extras apparently originally intended for the set , including TV spots and featurettes on " Digital Workflow " , " Linguistic Analysis " , " Jeopardy Surface : Geographic Profiling " (Dr. Kim Rossmo 's geographic

profile of the Zodiac) , and " The Psychology of Aggression : Behavioral Profiling " (Special Agent Sharon Pagaling @-@ Hagan 's behavioral profile of the Zodiac) were omitted . However , the latter three featurettes were made available on the film 's website . This new version runs five minutes longer than the theatrical cut . For Oscar contention , Paramount distributed the Director 's Cut DVD to the Producers Guild of America , the Writers Guild of America and the Screen Actors Guild , instead of the official release version . This was the first time that the studio had done this .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

Opening in 2 @, @ 362 theaters on March 2 , 2007 , the film grossed US \$ 13 @. @ 3 million in its opening weekend , placing second and posting a per @-@ theater average of \$ 5 @, @ 671 . The film was outgrossed by fellow opener Wild Hogs and saw a decline of over 50 % in its second weekend , losing out to the record @-@ breaking 300 . It grossed \$ 33 million in North America and \$ 51 million in the rest of the world , bringing its current total to \$ 84 million , above its estimated \$ 65 million production budget . In an interview with Sight & Sound magazine , Fincher addressed the film 's low gross at the North American box office : " Even with the box office being what it is , I still think there 's an audience out there for this movie . Everyone has a different idea about marketing , but my philosophy is that if you market a movie to 16 @-@ year @-@ old boys and don 't deliver Saw or Seven , they 're going to be the most vociferous ones coming out of the screening saying ' This movie sucks . ' And you 're saying goodbye to the audience who would get it because they 're going to look at the ads and say , ' I don 't want to see some slasher movie . ' "

= = = Critical response = = =

Overall , reviews of the film were highly positive . Entertainment Weekly critic Owen Gleiberman awarded the film an " A " grade , hailing the film as a " procedural thriller for the information age " that " spins your head in a new way , luring you into a vortex and then deeper still . " Nathan Lee in his review for The Village Voice wrote that director Fincher 's " very lack of pretense , coupled with a determination to get the facts down with maximum economy and objectivity , gives Zodiac its hard , bright integrity . As a crime saga , newspaper drama , and period piece , it works just fine . As an allegory of life in the information age , it blew my mind . " Todd McCarthy 's review in Variety praised the film 's " almost unerringly accurate evocation of the workaday San Francisco of 35 ? 40 years ago . Forget the distorted emphasis on hippies and flower @-@ power that many such films indulge in ; this is the city as it was experienced by most people who lived and worked there . " David Ansen , in his review for Newsweek magazine , wrote , " Zodiac is meticulously crafted ? Harris Savides 's state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art digital cinematography has a richness indistinguishable from film ? and it runs almost two hours and 40 minutes . Still , the movie holds you in its grip from start to finish . Fincher boldly (and some may think perversely) withholds the emotional and forensic payoff we 're conditioned to expect from a big studio movie . "

Some critics , however , were displeased with the film 's long running time and lack of action scenes . " The film gets mired in the inevitable red tape of police investigations , " wrote Bob Longino of The Atlanta Journal @-@ Constitution , who also felt that the film " stumbles to a rather unfulfilling conclusion " and " seems to last as long as the Oscars . " Andrew Sarris of The New York Observer felt that " Mr. Fincher 's flair for casting is the major asset of his curiously attenuated return to the serial @-@ killer genre . I keep saying ' curiously ' with regard to Mr. Fincher , because I can 't really figure out what he is up to in Zodiac ? with its two @-@ hour @-@ and @-@ 37 @-@ minute running time for what struck me as a shaggy @-@ dog narrative . " Christy Lemire wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle that " Jake Gyllenhaal is both the central figure and the weakest link ... But he 's never fleshed out sufficiently to make you believe that he 'd sacrifice his safety and that of his family to find the truth . We are told repeatedly that the former Eagle Scout is just a genuinely good guy ,

but that 's not enough . "

In the United Kingdom , Time Out magazine wrote , " Zodiac isn 't a puzzle film in quite that way ; instead its subject is the compulsion to solve puzzles , and its coup is the creeping recognition , quite contrary to the flow of crime cinema , of how fruitless that compulsion can be . " Peter Bradshaw in his review for The Guardian commended the film for its " sheer cinematic virility , " and gave it four stars out of five . In his review for Empire magazine , Kim Newman gave the film four out of five stars and wrote , " You 'll need patience with the film 's approach , which follows its main characters by poring over details , and be prepared to put up with a couple of rote family arguments and weary cop conversations , but this gripping character study becomes more agonisingly suspenseful as it gets closer to an answer that can 't be confirmed . " Graham Fuller in Sight & Sound magazine wrote , " the tone is pleasingly flat and mundane , evoking the demoralising grind of police work in a pre @-@ feminist , pre @-@ technological era . As such , Zodiac is considerably more adult than both Seven , which salivates over the macabre cat @-@ and @-@ mouse game it plays with the audience , and the macho brinkmanship of Fight Club . " Not all British critics liked the film . David Thompson in The Guardian felt that in relation to the rest of Fincher 's career , Zodiac was " the worst yet , a terrible disappointment in which an ingenious and deserving all @-@ American serial killer nearly gets lost in the meandering treatment of cops and journalists obsessed with the case . "

In France , Le Monde newspaper praised Fincher for having " obtained a maturity that impresses by his mastery of form , " while Libération described the film as " a thriller of elegance magnificently photographed by the great Harry Savides . " However , Le Figaro wrote , " No audacity , no invention , nothing but a plot which intrigues without captivating , disturbs without terrifying , interests without exciting . "

As of December 2015 , Zodiac has a rating of 89 % rating on Rotten Tomatoes based on 233 reviews dubbing it " Certified Fresh " . Its consensus states " A quiet , dialogue @-@ driven thriller that delivers with scene after scene of gut @-@ wrenching anxiety . David Fincher also spends more time illustrating nuances of his characters and recreating the mood of the 70s than he does on gory details of murder . " . It also has a 78 metascore at Metacritic .

= = = = Top ten lists = = = =

Only two 2007 films (No Country for Old Men and There Will Be Blood) appeared on more critics ' top ten lists than Zodiac . Some of the notable top @-@ ten list appearances are :

In the British Film Institute 's 2012 Sight & Sound polls of the greatest movies ever made , three critics and one director ? Bong Joon @-@ ho ? named Zodiac one of their 10 favorite films .

= = = Accolades = = =

Nominations

Cannes Film Festival 2007 : Palme d 'Or

Chicago Film Critics Association Awards 2007 : Best Director , Best Screenplay Adapted

Satellite Awards 2007 : Best Supporting Actor (Brian Cox) , Best Cinematography (Harris Savides) , Best Adapted Screenplay (James Vanderbilt)

Teen Choice Awards 2007 : Choice Movie Actor : Horror / Thriller (Jake Gyllenhaal)

Toronto Film Critics Association Awards 2007 : Best Director (David Fincher) , Best Picture

Online Film Critics Society Awards 2007 : Best Picture , Best Director , Best Adapted Screenplay , Best Editing

World Soundtrack Awards 2007 : Best Original Soundtrack of the Year (David Shire)

Saturn Award 2008 : Best Action or Adventure Film

Bodil Awards 2008 : Best American Film

Empire Awards 2008 : Best Director (David Fincher) , Best Film , Best Thriller

Edgar Allan Poe Awards 2008 : Best Motion Picture Screenplay (James Vanderbilt)

Golden Trailer Awards 2008 : Best Teaser Poster

London Critics Circle Film Awards 2008 : Director of The Year (David Fincher) , Film of The Year
USC Scriptor Award 2008 : James Vanderbilt (screenwriter) , Robert Graysmith (author)
Visual Effects Society Awards 2008 : Outstanding Supporting Visual Effects in a Motion Picture and
Outstanding Created Environment in a Live Action Motion Picture
Writers Guild of America Awards 2007 : Best Adapted Screenplay (James Vanderbilt and Robert
Graysmith) from Zodiac