

= Wanted (2008 film) =

Wanted is a 2008 American @-@ German action thriller film based on the comic book miniseries of the same name by Mark Millar and J. G. Jones . The film , written by Chris Morgan , Michael Brandt , and Derek Haas and directed by Timur Bekmambetov stars James McAvoy , Morgan Freeman , and Angelina Jolie . The storyline follows Wesley Gibson (McAvoy) , a frustrated account manager who discovers that he is the son of a professional assassin and decides to join the Fraternity , a secret society in which his father worked .

Universal Studios acquired the adaptation rights from Millar in 2004 , and while the eventual script drifted from the comic book supervillain mythos in the original miniseries , Millar was content to see most of the comic 's darker content was retained . Production began in April 2007 , with filming in the Czech Republic , Budapest , and the story 's main setting , Chicago . Wanted was released in June 2008 to both critical and commercial success , with box office earnings of \$ 341 million worldwide and reviews praising the fast pacing and stylized action scenes . A sequel was planned the same year as the film 's release , but ultimately stalled in the development phase .

= = Plot = =

In Chicago , 24 @-@ year @-@ old Wesley Gibson (James McAvoy) works at a dead @-@ end desk job with an overbearing boss , takes anti @-@ anxiety medication for panic attacks , and has an unfaithful live @-@ in girlfriend who cheats on him with his friend and colleague , Barry (Chris Pratt) . One night at the pharmacy , Wesley is told by a woman named Fox (Angelina Jolie) that his recently murdered father was an assassin , and the killer , a man named Cross (Thomas Kretschmann) , is now hunting him . Cross and Fox engage in a shoot @-@ out with hi @-@ tech guns . Wesley panics and runs into the parking lot followed by Cross who steals a truck and attempts to run Wesley down . Fox flips Wesley into her car and then calmly executes a spectacular escape .

Wesley awakens in the headquarters of the Fraternity , a secret society of assassins . The group 's leader , Sloan (Morgan Freeman) , explains that Wesley 's panic attacks are actually the untrained expression of a rare ability that allows Wesley 's body to distribute massive amounts of adrenaline , granting superhuman strength , speed , and heightened perception . Sloan wants to teach him to control this ability , and to become an assassin and join their cause .

Wesley initially panics and returns to his former life . The next morning , he discovers that his bank account now contains several million dollars . The discovery changes his outlook on life , and during a tirade from his boss , Wesley snaps and delivers a public diatribe . Afterward , he picks up a keyboard and during his exit , hits Barry 's face with it . Fox arrives while Wesley is outside looking at newspaper headlines of the previous night 's events .

Wesley is trained for his new life and is soon shown the Loom of Fate , which gives the names of future targets through errors in the fabric . Those the Loom identifies will apparently cause problems in the future , but only Sloan can see and interpret the messages . Though Wesley is initially reluctant to kill , he is convinced when Fox tells him that , in her childhood , a hired killer who burned her father alive had been previously identified by The Loom , but efforts to kill him were unsuccessful .

After several missions , Wesley finally manages to leave his girlfriend . He soon has a shootout with Cross , wherein Wesley accidentally kills another Fraternity member . Cross shoots Wesley in the shoulder . Sloan grants Wesley 's wish to avenge his father and sends him after Cross ? but then secretly gives Fox a mission to kill Wesley , saying that his name had come up in the Loom , as well . Analyzing the bullet that hit Wesley , it is discovered that it was manufactured by a man named Pekwarsky . Wesley and Fox capture Pekwarsky , who arranges a meeting with Cross . Wesley faces Cross alone on a moving train . Fox steals a car and crashes it into the train , causing a derailment . After Cross saves Wesley from falling into a ravine , Wesley fatally shoots him . Before dying , Cross reveals that he is Wesley 's real father . Fox confirms this , and explains that Wesley was recruited because he was the only person Cross would not kill . Fox points her gun at Wesley ,

but he shoots the glass under him and falls into the river .

Wesley is retrieved by Pekwarsky , who takes him to Wesley 's late father 's apartment (which is located just opposite to his own) and explains that Sloan started manufacturing targets for profit after discovering that he was targeted by the Loom of Fate , and he did not tell the Fraternity members that they were now nothing more than paid killers . Cross discovered the truth , went rogue , and started killing Fraternity members to keep them away from his son . Pekwarsky departs , stating that Wesley 's father wished him a life free of violence . Wesley , however , decides to kill Sloan after discovering a secret room containing all of his father 's weapons and maps .

After putting explosives on rats to access the Fraternity 's headquarters , Wesley kills nearly every Fraternity member . Upon entering Sloan 's office , he reveals Sloan 's deception to those present in the room . Sloan reveals that all of the assassins ' names had come up in the weaving , and that he had acted to protect them . He gives the members a choice : kill themselves , per the code ; or kill Wesley . The members are considering breaking the code and killing Wesley , but Fox , who believes more in the code , turns on her fellow assassins and curves a bullet that kills everyone but Sloan and Wesley . She throws her gun to distract Wesley , before being killed by her own bullet . Wesley pursues Sloan to the now destroyed Loom chamber , but Sloan manages to escape .

Afterwards , Wesley checks his bank account and sees that Sloan has seized his funds , leaving Wesley broke again . A man is seen at Wesley 's desk much later . Sloan appears and points a gun at the back of the man 's head . The man turns around and is revealed to be a decoy . Sloan is killed by Wesley using a long @-@ distance bullet . Wesley states his accomplishments , saying : " this is me taking control , from Sloan , from the Fraternity , from Janice , from billing reports , from ergonomic keyboards , from cheating girlfriends , and sack @-@ of @-@ shit best friends . This is me taking back control of my life " , and asks the audience : " What the fuck have you done lately ? "

= = Cast = =

James McAvoy as Wesley Gibson , a meek 24 @-@ year @-@ old who works in a cubicle , but learns he is heir to a career as an assassin .

Morgan Freeman as Sloan , leader of the Fraternity and partner of Wesley 's deceased father .

Angelina Jolie as Fox , an accomplished member of the Fraternity who mentors Wesley .

Thomas Kretschmann as Cross , a rogue assassin who has left the Fraternity , and later revealed to be Wesley 's real father .

Common as Earl Spellman a.k.a. " Gunsmith " , a professional gunman who trains others to use weapons .

Konstantin Khabensky as " The Exterminator " , an expert in explosives who makes bombs and attaches them to rats . One of Wesley 's only friends in the Fraternity .

Marc Warren as " The Repairman " , an assassin who says he " breaks bad habits " by violently beating people . Trains Wesley in hand @-@ to @-@ hand combat and endurance .

Dato Bakhtadze as " The Butcher " , a knife @-@ expert . Trains Wesley in knife fighting .

Terence Stamp as Pekwarsky , a master in the science of killing . Pekwarsky operates as a rogue agent outside of The Fraternity . He is also a craftsman who is able to build bullets both untraceable and capable of traversing long distances . One of Cross 's compatriots .

David O 'Hara as Mr. X , the first Fraternity member . Said to be the greatest assassin , and believed to be Wesley 's father . His murder is the catalyst for Wesley 's introduction into the Fraternity . He is killed by Cross .

Chris Pratt as Barry , Wesley 's co @-@ worker and best friend , who is having an affair with Wesley 's girlfriend .

Kristen Hager as Cathy , Wesley 's unfaithful and bickering girlfriend .

Sophiya Haque as Puja

Lorna Scott as Janice , Wesley 's overbearing boss .

= = Production = =

= = = Pre @-@ production and writing = = =

The 2003 @-@ 04 comic book miniseries *Wanted*, by Mark Millar and J. G. Jones, came to the attention of Universal Pictures through executive Jeff Kirschenbaum, a comic book fan who sought a film adaptation that would be considered a "hard @-@ R" and encouraged the studio to pick up the rights to the miniseries. By 2004, producer Marc Platt had gotten the film rights, and lobbied the studio to get Russian @-@ Kazakh director Timur Bekmambetov, as Platt considered that the visual style and sensibility Bekmambetov showed in *Night Watch* and *Day Watch* fit *Wanted* as "the comic is dark and edgy but it also has an ironic, comedic tone beneath its violent action". In December 2005, Bekmambetov was hired to helm the project, his first English @-@ language film, and writers Derek Haas and Michael Brandt were assigned the script. Bekmambetov described the original comic as "risky and very provocative", with "a twist and good characters", and declared that the thing that attracted him the most in *Wanted* was how it went through various film genres in its plot: "It's a comedy, a tragedy, a drama, a melodrama. Every scene, we change genres and that's why our movie is different."

Universal was initially reluctant on giving a potentially lucrative action film to a filmmaker who had never made an English @-@ language film, but Platt convinced the studio that he could "create an environment that would allow Timur to be himself as a filmmaker and exercise his creative muscles".

Millar did not like the first draft of the screenplay, considering that the approach was "too tame" and "a little bit Americanized" given he wanted "basically be the opposite of the Spider @-@ Man movie, the idea of someone getting powers and realizing they can do what they want, then choosing the dark path." The author only started to support the direction the project was taking once Bekmambetov "came in with his Eastern European madness" and the intention of coming closer to the spirit of the book. Bekmambetov said that he would take liberty in adapting the comic book's world: "It's difficult for me to just follow. It's interesting for me to create. I feel a little bit different how this world has to be executed". In July 2006, screenwriter Chris Morgan was hired to revise the third act of the *Wanted* script written by Haas and Brandt. Haas and Brandt returned to polish the character of Wesley Gibson, which they had established in their first draft.

Wanted co @-@ creator Mark Millar saw previsualized footage for the film and said that the footage had raised his expectations for the film adaptation. Millar described the first half of the film as being close to the graphic novel, and also said that the film's ending was similar, though it was relocated elsewhere from the setting in the graphic novel. The superhero costumes in the series were also removed, with the exception of the leather attire worn by Wesley and Fox. Coincidentally, this had been Millar's intent when writing the graphic novel, although he and artist J. G. Jones had forgotten to. He said, "I wanted them to have those powers and then just wear those costumes for the initiation, but just for one panel. And then I forgot." Millar also stated that he would have liked to keep the supervillain mythos that dictates the original comic in the film. Millar was favorable to most of the changes in the storyline, including the story arc of the Fates issuing death orders in line with the series' original theme of predestination. Angelina Jolie asked for Fox to get killed, saying that "[i]f [Fox] was to find out she had killed people unjustly and was a part of something that wasn't fair, then she should take her own life."

= = = Casting = = =

James McAvoy, who had screen @-@ tested for the role early in 2006, was initially rejected because the studio was seeking an actor with conventional Hollywood leading man looks and physique. McAvoy was later recalled, being considered the "runt of the litter" of those who tested. According to McAvoy, "They [ultimately] wanted someone geeky." McAvoy was cast in the role in October 2006. The Scottish actor, who portrays an American in the film, worked out to improve his physique for the film's action scenes, and suffered several injuries during shooting, including a

twisted ankle and an injured knee .

Angelina Jolie was cast in March 2007 , after screenwriter Dean Georgaris rewrote the screenplay to tailor the role of Fox for her . Mark Millar became much more enthusiastic about the project after learning that Jolie had accepted the role of Fox , saying " the only way they could have got a bigger star to play this role is if they 'd hired Tom Cruise in drag . " Jolie decided to make Fox seem " distant and unattainable " by having her silent in many scenes . She mentioned Clint Eastwood , who had recently directed her in the film Changeling , as a possible influence for this aspect of her performance .

Common became interested in the role due to both the script and the prospect of working with McAvoy , Jolie , and Morgan Freeman . Common learned a great deal about firearms as preparation for the role , but said he is not a strong supporter of guns in real life . Konstantin Khabensky , who starred in Bekmambetov 's Night Watch , was cast so that the director would have a familiar face around . British television veteran Marc Warren agreed to work in the film because he always wanted to be in a Hollywood blockbuster . Thomas Kretschmann originally intended to pick up the comic series after being cast , but Bekmambetov convinced him not to . He said that he " did excessive gun training " to " make sure I look good and I look like I know what I 'm doing " . Kristen Hager originally auditioned for Fox , but accepted the role of Cathy , considering it " fun to play " .

== = Filming == =

Location plate shooting took place in Chicago in April 2007 . Several chase scenes , including one with a low flying helicopter , were shot in Chicago over two days , on Wacker Drive along the Chicago River , between Columbus Drive and LaSalle Street . The opening scene was filmed using the Carbide & Carbon Building . Production moved to the Czech Republic later in May , scheduled for 12 weeks of shooting . Using a former sugar factory in Prague , production designer John Myhre constructed a large textile factory as part of an industrial world , the setting of a mythological environment in which looms create fabrics that weavers interpret as assassination orders . Afterward , filming moved to Budapest , then returned to Chicago in August . While the actors performed many of their own stunts , with free running and parkour in some of the action scenes , and Angelina Jolie being actually strapped to the hood of a moving Dodge Viper , some of the especially high @-@ risk sequences required digital doubles instead . Two full @-@ sized train cars were built , a Chicago ' L ' for a training scene where Fox and Wesley run atop a train , and a Czech Pendolino for the derailment , which was stationed in a gimbal equipped with hydraulics to allow the car to tilt and roll as the train crashed . The film originally had both an alternate opening and an alternate ending . The alternate opening , a flashback to ancient times describing the history of the Fraternity and the Loom of Fate , is available on the special edition DVD and Blu @-@ ray .

== = Effects == =

Eight visual effects companies worked on the film 's 800 effects shots , the majority of which was done by Bekmambetov 's company Bazelevs Production . The first effects supervisor , Jon Farhat , was forced to withdraw from the production due to illness and was replaced by Stefen Fangmeier , who accepted the task as Wanted would only require four months of work . Once Fangmeier visited Bazelevs in Moscow , the effects were behind schedule , with only 12 finished composites out of the planned 500 . Fangemier then brought two other supervisors to assist him in finishing many shots per week , so the job could get done by the deadline , a process the supervisor described as " a creative challenge on one hand , but on the other also a significant production challenge . " Another major contributor was London @-@ based Framestore , responsible for the climactic train crash .

== = Music == =

Danny Elfman wrote the film 's score , a job he accepted for being a fan of Bekmambetov 's previous films . Considering the film to be a " weird , twisted , sarcastic thing , " Elfman decided to

make a guitar @-@ based soundtrack , with the " nastiest sounds " and a " heavy metal approach . " This included a rock song written and performed by Elfman , " The Little Things " , which is featured throughout the film and on the end credits . The film score has been released on June 24 , 2008 in North America by Lakeshore Records .

= = Release and promotion = =

Wanted was initially set to be released in cinemas on March 28 , 2008 . However , in December 2007 , Universal Pictures announced that it would be pushing back the release date to June 27 , 2008 , as the studio considered that the film had the potential to stand among the blockbusters that would be released during the United States summer . The film 's world premiere happened at the Los Angeles Film Festival on June 19 , with Wanted acting as the festival opener . Given the Russian origin of the director , Universal released a specially localized version in Russia . The literary translation of the English dialog was written by the writer Sergey Lukyanenko . Several texts appearing on the screen and important for the plot were translated using CGI , without using subtitles or a voice @-@ over translation . Several famous Russian actors , most of which were also in Bekmambetov 's Night Watch and Day Watch , dubbed the main characters , and Konstantin Khabensky dubbed himself as The Exterminator . James McAvoy also provided some words in Russian for Wesley Gibson . Danny Elfman 's song " The Little Things " received a version in Russian , performed by Elfman himself , and Bekmambetov also directed a music video for the band Delta as part of a viral marketing campaign in Russia .

= = = Theatrical run = = =

Wanted debuted in 3 @,@ 185 theaters and earned \$ 50 @,@ 927 @,@ 085 in its opening weekend , placing it at second place after WALL @-@ E. It was the best opening ever for an R @-@ rated film released in June , only surpassed four years later by both Prometheus and Ted . Internationally , the film grossed \$ 33 million on its opening weekend , breaking records in Russia and South Korea . Wanted grossed \$ 341 @,@ 433 @,@ 252 , of which \$ 134 @,@ 508 @,@ 551 was from North America and \$ 206 @,@ 924 @,@ 701 was from elsewhere .

= = = Home video = = =

Wanted was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray on December 2 , 2008 in the U.S. Two versions were released , including a single @-@ disc DVD and a two @-@ disc edition of both the DVD and Blu @-@ ray . A collectible two @-@ disc gift @-@ set DVD also included collectible postcards , a lenticular film cel in an acrylic frame , and a photobook of the Assassins . The DVD debuted at second place on the charts (behind The Chronicles of Narnia : Prince Caspian) , and generated over \$ 65 million in revenue by February 2009 . The Blu @-@ ray debuted at first place on the charts .

= = = Video games = = =

Sweden @-@ based developer Stillfront AB launched a browser game based on Wanted on April 2008 . The Wanted " Fan Immersion Game " was a massively multiplayer online role @-@ playing game where players took the roles of Fraternity hitmen , performing assassination missions , upgrading weapons and ammunition , and creating alliances or rivalries with other players . A video game sequel to the events of the film , Wanted : Weapons of Fate , was released on March 2009 . It was developed by GRIN , and published by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 , and Xbox 360 .

= = Reception = =

The film received positive reviews from critics . Review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes gives the film a score of 72 % based on reviews from 200 critics , with a rating average of 6 @. @ 6 out of 10 . The site 's general consensus reads : " Wanted is stylish , energetic popcorn fare with witty performances from Angelina Jolie (playing an expert assassin) , James McAvoy , and Morgan Freeman that help to distract from its absurdly over @-@ the @-@ top plot . " Metacritic , which assigns a weighted mean rating based on reviews from film critics , gives the film a score of 64 out of 100 , based on 38 reviews , indicating " generally favorable reviews . "

Roger Ebert of Ebert & Roeper said " Wanted slams the pedal to the metal and never slows down . Here 's an action picture that 's exhausting in its relentless violence and its ingenuity in inventing new ways to attack , defend , ambush and annihilate " . Richard Roeper said , " It 's made for fans of films that really just want to see some great visuals , some amazing sequences and some terrific performances . "

Lisa Schwarzbaum of Entertainment Weekly encapsulated many critics ' views , saying that " Wanted is kind of unintelligible and idiotic . Also kind of nasty and brutish . And also undeniably kind of fun ... " Likewise , Tom Long of The Detroit News said , " Wanted may be the most absolutely stone bonkers , crazy @-@ good movie of the century . Or it may be a gargantuan piece of trash . Chances are it 's a combination of the two . But man , does it rock . " Claudia Puig of USA Today found the " thrilling stunts and hyperkinetic action scenes [to be] the undisputed stars of this surprisingly entertaining film . "

Conversely , John Rosenblatt of The Austin Chronicle denounced those same attributes , saying , " If Maxim magazine ever decides to branch out into filmmaking , Wanted is just the kind of ear @-@ throttling nonsense it 's bound to produce " . David Fear of Time Out New York called it " the cinematic equivalent of an energy drink . The film keeps artificially pumping your adrenal glands with mindless , malnutritional sensations , only to leave you crampy and cranky minutes later [T] his exercise in ultraviolence then insults us by having a beaten , bloodied McAvoy inform viewers that he used to be a loser ' just like all of you . ' " Frank Lovece of Film Journal International , one of few mainstream critics to have read the comic @-@ book miniseries , said that the film compared poorly with the source material . Noting that the hero in the comic goes even further , " breaking the fourth wall and positioning himself so that he 's ' prison @-@ raping ' and taunting the reader for having liked the series " , Lovece found that , " [w] hile Millar may have contempt for his readers ? and , by extension , the medium in which he works ? at least he has his own vision , and gets it across with style and wit " ; qualities that , in Lovece 's opinion , the movie lacked .

In the comics press , Erik Amaya of Comic Book Resources said that " [t] he film 's biggest faults lie in how far it strays from the source " and that " [i] f you 've ever seen any movie about leather @-@ clad assassins , you already know how this film plays out . The speed and skill of the movie @-@ making balance out those faults , however . " Tom McLean of Newsarama noted that , while the story deviated strongly from the source , the movie " stands out as a highly entertaining action film that preserves the comic 's core premise and cheeky attitude while taking the story into very different but still satisfying territory . "

Among European critics , Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian said that the film " looks as if it has been written by a committee of 13 @-@ year @-@ old boys for whom penetrative sex is still only a rumour , and the resulting movie plays like a party political broadcast on behalf of the misogynist party " , concluding , " In an ideal world , the title would have the word ' Not ' tacked on to the front . " Kim Newman , writing in Empire , praised Bekmambetov as " the most exciting action @-@ oriented emigré since John Woo " and commented that the film 's gruesome violence " hint [s] at the comic 's uncomfortable suggestion that escapism is merely a licence to become monstrous . "

Wanted won the Empire Award for Best Sci @-@ Fi / Superhero Movie of 2008 . The film was nominated for two Academy Awards ; for Best Sound Editing and Best Sound Mixing (Chris Jenkins , Frank A. Montaño , and Petr Forejt) . It was also nominated for the Critics Choice Award for Best Action Movie , the Saturn Award for Best Fantasy Film , three MTV Movie Awards , and the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Stunt Ensemble .

= = Sequel = =

Even before the film 's release , Mark Millar announced director Timur Bekmambetov was planning a sequel , though Millar denied that he would write a sequel to the comic book . He was instead creating a story along with the producers , that would follow the first film 's idea of an international guild of assassins . Terence Stamp described Pekwarsky as " something that 's written for a sequel " , and Common expressed interest in a prequel , feeling that both The Gunsmith and Fox deserved more exposition .

Chris Morgan would return to write the sequel 's screenplay , but departed on April 2009 due to " excessive workload " , leaving the task to Evan Spiliotopoulos . On June 2009 , Bekmambetov said that pre @-@ production for Wanted 2 was about to get started , with filming scheduled to begin in late fall or winter . The film will have a reported budget of \$ 150 million and will be shot in the United States , India , and Russia . He also added that some of the characters would resurrect , particularly Fox and The Exterminator . On September , the director added that even without a finished script Bazelevs had already done previsualization of the action scenes . In 2010 , after reports that Angelina Jolie had pulled out of the sequel , Millar said that the script would be rewritten to remove Fox 's return , so production could start that year for a late 2011 release . Eventually the production did not take off , leading Bekmambetov to work on Abraham Lincoln : Vampire Hunter instead .

In a 2011 Q & A , producer Jim Lemley said that " Wanted 2 sounds like it will not happen any time soon if at all " . That same year , James McAvoy said , regarding the sequel , " I think the studio is keen to make it , and we really want to make it , but we want to make it if it 's right and when it 's right , and that might not be ever . " McAvoy also expressed interest in a sequel focusing on a character other than Wesley . Universal later brought Wanted screenwriters Michael Brandt and Derek Haas to write the sequel , which Haas described as happening " right after the events that just happened ; it 'll pick up Wesley a few years later and go back in for another round " , while also being " Fox @-@ less and loom @-@ less . " Haas would later detail that the script featured a new female protagonist , who Wesley would recruit " sort of in the Fox role . " Bekmambetov declared during the interviews for Abraham Lincoln : Vampire Hunter that after many years of indecision as the Wanted sequel stalled in development , he proposed an idea to the screenwriters wherein the plot followed Wesley while featuring " a great twist . "

McAvoy declared that since he " had a blast making the first Wanted " , he would make a sequel regardless of the quality of the script ; however , he also acknowledged that the extended time the film spent in development " suggests to me that they 're not finding it very easy to come up with a story that they 're passionate about , so we 'll have to wait and see . " In 2014 , McAvoy acknowledged that a potential sequel has been in the talks , saying he " had a couple of versions of script thrown my way " while adding that Universal is still waiting for the right screenplay .