

= Evan Almighty =

Evan Almighty is a 2007 American comedy film and the stand @-@ alone sequel / spin @-@ off to Bruce Almighty (2003) . The film was directed by Tom Shadyac , written by Steve Oedekerk , based on the characters created by Steve Koren and Mark O 'Keefe from the original film , and starring Steve Carell , Morgan Freeman , Lauren Graham , John Goodman , John Michael Higgins , Jimmy Bennett and Wanda Sykes .

Production of the film began in January 2006 . Several visual effect companies were used to provide CGI for the numerous animals and the climactic flood scene . The main plot is a modern @-@ day retelling of Noah 's Ark . By the time the film had completed production , it had become the most expensive comedy film ever at the time ; it was later overtaken by Men in Black 3 . In October 2007 , the film was released on DVD and HD DVD .

The film grossed less than its budget of \$ 175 million worldwide , and received generally negative reviews . Evan Almighty was also notable for allegations that the many animals used in the film were treated poorly , but Universal Pictures stressed the animals ' conditions were acceptable .

= = Plot = =

Newly elected to Congress , former local television news reporter Evan Baxter (Steve Carell) leaves his hometown of Buffalo , New York and moves to the fictional town of Prestige Crest , Virginia , where his congressional campaign officially declares that he will change the world . Evan prays to God (Morgan Freeman) to give him this opportunity . His wife , Joan (Lauren Graham) , also prays that she , Evan , and their three sons (Jimmy Bennett , Graham Phillips , and Johnny Simmons) will be closer together as a family . On the first day of his job at Congress , Evan is given a prime office space , where he is accompanied by his three congressional staffers , Rita , Marty , and Eugene (Wanda Sykes , John Michael Higgins , and Jonah Hill) , and invited to junior co @-@ sponsor the Public Land Act bill with his greedy boss , Chuck Long (John Goodman) . Soon after Evan 's election to Congress , six strange things start to happen around him :

The number 614 starts to appear everywhere he goes (i.e. alarm clock , government license plate , Rita 's phone extension)

Ancient tools and gopher wood are delivered to his house that he actually did not order .

A man claiming to be the Genesis God appears everywhere he goes .

Pairs of animals simply follow Evan without any apparent reason (with birds even flying into his office through the window) .

Evan grows a beard no matter how many times he shaves .

Eight vacant lots in Prestige Crest are purchased in his name .

Evan soon learns that 614 refers to the verse in the Book of Genesis , where God originally instructs Noah to build an Ark in preparation for a flood . God later repeatedly appears in various guises before finally revealing himself to Evan , and cordially insisting that he should also build an Ark as well . God explains to Evan that a flood is coming , and that the only opportunity Evan will have to change the world is by saving his community instead . God also tells Evan to inform others about the flood should they ask him later . Concerned about Evan 's behaviour , Joan initially believes that he is having a mid @-@ life crisis . Evan begins constructing the Ark with his sons , who start to admire him as he is spending more time with them .

Animals eventually follow Evan to Congress . When Long discovers this , he allows Evan latitude at first , but warns him that he will no longer tolerate it if it happens again in the future . Meanwhile , Evan 's staffers are outraged by his change of appearance and behavior . When Evan returns to the Ark during construction , God presents him with a robe , and later tells him that the flood will likely come at midday on September 22 . When Joan becomes suspicious of his behavior , Evan tells her the truth : God has been talking to him and is responsible for his new looks and recent actions , although Joan does not believe Evan and she is convinced that he is beginning to lose his mind . After wearing the robe for some time , Evan finds it comfortable , but soon realizes that God will not allow him to take it off and wear anything else after two failed attempts to change his clothes later .

The next time Evan arrives at Congress for work , animals follow him once again and he is mysteriously changed into his robe midway during the session . Evan reluctantly explains his divine mission , but Long does not take him seriously , and Evan is suspended from Congress and removed from the Public Land Act bill . Evan deduces that God purposely had him suspended from Congress , so that he would have more time to build the Ark . In continued skepticism , Joan leaves Evan alone after believing that he is going insane .

Evan decides to build the Ark alone , gaining media attention and public ridicule , as hundreds of animals assemble in pairs . Meanwhile , God appears to Joan as a waiter at a diner . God listens to Joan as she expresses concern that Evan is only losing his sanity and allowing himself to become a laughing stock , though claiming that " God told him to do it " . Sympathetic toward Evan , God tells Joan that perhaps it is an only opportunity for them , and explains that he does not give things but only the opportunity by which to obtain things , citing togetherness of families as one of these things . Seeing God 's meaning , Joan returns to Evan with new @-@ found faith and continue helping him finish the Ark together in order to prepare for the flood . Meanwhile , Evan overhears from his staffers that Long has commissioned a dam and has cut corners in doing so , and that he will most likely do the same thing with his Public Land Act bill .

On September 22 , Evan loads hundreds of animals onto the Ark in front of hundreds of spectators and live news crews , who continue to mock him . Later , Long and the policemen arrive with a wrecking ball crew to try and destroy the Ark , since it violates numerous building codes in Prestige Crest . Minutes pass with no sign of rain , and while a heavy rainstorm does come , it passes within moments , leaving Evan himself humiliated . However , Evan connects Long 's profiteering ethics and what God had already told him , and realizes that the dam under Long Lake is preparing to burst . Evan warns to those present must board the Ark , and many have do so when the prophesied flood is triggered shortly after the dam burst . Prestige Crest is catastrophically destroyed , and the Ark later rides the flood through the streets and landmarks of Washington , D.C .. The Ark reaches its final destination in front of the Capitol , which disrupts the vote on the Public Land Act bill . Long becomes outraged that the flood did really happen . Evan informs Long that the flood was actually caused by his poor design of the dam , which prompts the other Congressmen also present to turn against Long .

After Congress suspends the Public Land Act bill to investigate Long 's profiteering ethics , and the animals return to their natural habitats , Evan is finally reinstated as a congressman , and celebrates this event by shaving his beard , changing back into his regular clothes , and going on a long @-@ promised hiking trip . When God reappears once again during the hike , Evan is initially disappointed in which he realizes he never needed to build the Ark since the flood had only happened because of Long 's defective dam . However , God reassures Evan that he now has a perfect life as well as everything that he had originally prayed for , and that this would not have happened otherwise . Evan is happy to realize this , and God informs him that the right way to change the world is by doing one Act of Random Kindness (ARK) at a time . During the film 's closing credits , God issues a new commandment to the outgoing audience : " Thou shalt do the dance " . This is later followed by a footage of the film 's cast and crew members dancing to C + C Music Factory 's hit song " Gonna Make You Sweat (Everybody Dance Now) " .

= = Cast = =

Steve Carell as Evan Baxter

Morgan Freeman as God

Lauren Graham as Joan Baxter , Evan 's wife .

Johnny Simmons as Dylan Baxter

Jimmy Bennett as Ryan Baxter

Graham Phillips as Jordan Baxter

Wanda Sykes as Rita

John Michael Higgins as Marty

Jonah Hill as Eugene

John Goodman as Congressman Chuck Long , Evan 's greedy boss .
Molly Shannon as Eve Adams
Harve Presnell as Congressman Burrows
Jon Stewart as himself
Catherine Bell as Susan Ortega (Uncredited)
Dean Norris as Officer Collins
Maile Flanagan as Mail Carrier
Lisa Arch and Simon Helberg as staffers
David Barrera and Ed Helms as Ark reporters
Ruth Williamson as neighbor
Jim Doughan as neighbor
Michael Roper as Congressional Reporter
Emily Eby as Animal Wrangler
Bart the Bear 2 and Honey Bump as bears

= = Production = =

= = = Screenplay = = =

The film 's screenplay was originally titled The Passion of the Ark and was written by Bobby Florsheim and Josh Stolberg . It became the subject of a seven @-@ studio bidding war in April 2004 . The script was sold to Sony Pictures in a deal worth \$ 2 @,@ 500 @,@ 000 plus a percentage of the profits , a record for a spec script from previously unproduced writers . Universal Studios immediately made a deal to co @-@ produce the script with Sony and have Steve Oedekerk rewrite it into the sequel to Bruce Almighty . Steve Oedekerk had been involved with Bruce Almighty as an executive producer and co @-@ writer of the screenplay (with Steve Koren and Mark O 'Keefe , who wrote the story) . The studio later discarded the original The Passion of the Ark script completely , and Oedekerk fashioned a new script from scratch (only he received final credit on the finished film as screenwriter) . Jim Carrey was asked to reprise his role as Bruce in the sequel and , when he declined , director Tom Shadyac convinced Steve Carell to accept the leading role . Shadyac , reflecting on the first film , stated " [Carell] delivered some of the funniest stuff in the movie . We thought , ' Why not take that character and spin him off into a different film ? ' "

= = = Casting = = =

Jim Carrey declined to reprise his role from the original Bruce Almighty . Although Carrey did act in a sequel to Ace Ventura : Pet Detective , he has said that he is " not a big fan of doing the same character twice . " This marked the third time a sequel has been made to a film for which Carrey declined to reprise his role ; the first were Dumb and Dumberer and Son of the Mask .

= = = Budget = = =

The initial budget , at approximately \$ 140 million , led Evan Almighty to become the most expensive comedy film ever made . Added costs such as set construction , visual effects , and problems with filming multiple animals in a controlled location brought the budget up to \$ 175 million . Once marketing for the film was also included , the film 's entire budget was estimated to be around \$ 200 million . The ballooning budget caused Sony to drop the project and hand it over entirely to Universal Studios . Part of the budget was Carell 's payroll , where he earned a reported \$ 5 million for his leading role . The Virginia Film Office estimates the film brought \$ 20 ? 25 million to Virginia , with the majority of it in the Charlottesville area .

= = = Ark design and construction = = =

Construction of the ark began in January 2006 and the scenes involving the ark were shot in a Crozet , Virginia subdivision called Old Trail . The ark was designed to meet the actual measurements of the biblical ark , measuring 450 feet (137 m) long , 80 feet (24 m) wide , and 51 feet (16 m) high . The ark 's layout was also based on pictures in several children 's books that crew members had read in their childhoods . When the characters were filmed during the day building the ark or were on location elsewhere , crew members would further construct the ark at night . A concrete base was built to support the weight of the large ark ; after filming was completed , the ark was taken down in a week , and the base in another week .

In disassembling the set , everything that was salvageable from the ark was donated to Habitat for Humanity . " Leave no trace " was the slogan used by the director as part of the DVD 's bonus features , " The Almighty Green Set " .

= = = Costumes and filming locations = = =

To create Evan 's beard and long hair , three designers would take three hours each day adding individual hairs using prosthetic adhesive and making Carell wear custom wigs . The wigs consisted of both human and yak hair . With his new look , Carell was sometimes nicknamed " Mountain Man " , " Retrosexual " , or " Unabomber . " For his costumes , designers spoke with textile experts , researched historical information on the clothing that was likely worn at the time of Noah , and used aged fibers for the clothing .

Scenes for the film were filmed in various locations in Virginia , including areas in and around Crozet , Waynesboro , Richmond , Charlottesville , and Staunton , though some filming did take place at Universal Studios in Hollywood , California .

= = = Effects = = =

For the CGI used throughout the film , companies Rhythm & Hues (R & H) and Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) developed different parts of the film . R & H focused on the animation of the animals , while ILM completed the final scene of the ark rushing through Washington D.C. Lindy De Quattro , the ILM associate visual effects supervisor , revealed that " This is the first time where we had to do a whole series of shots that were happening mid @-@ day , where you were going to get a really long look at the water and what it was doing . " The company initially experienced problems creating the water effects and had to develop new tools which would choreograph the movements of the water . In addition , ILM used similar tools that were used on their prior film Poseidon . Lighting was also an issue as the characters on the ark had been filmed on a greenscreen stage , and the visual effects company had to ensure that the lighting matched that of the characters and the outside setting . Details were added to the ark for long @-@ distance shots to make the design of the ark more appealing and relate the ark 's size to scale in comparison to the amount of water . To complete the scene , ILM used thirty to sixty crew members and produced 200 shots over a yearlong period between April 2006 and May 2007 .

Rhythm & Hues created 300 pairs of animals for use on the ark and fifteen pairs with higher detail for closeup shots . R & H was also assisted by C.I.S. Hollywood , another visual effects company , who provided a large number of composites , involving hundreds of greenscreen animal elements . In scenes where there are multiple species of animals , crew members would film the animals on the greenscreen and R & H and C.I.S would digitally add the animals one at a time , sometimes taking several weeks to a couple of months . Andy Arnett , the animation supervisor , declared that " The research was extensive . It took six or seven months to perfect the look and feel of the animals before we had the first shot out the door . "

For the scene in Congressman Long 's office , CGI was used the entire time for the fish that follow Evan around from the fish tank . Cafe FX , the visual effects company hired for the scene , ordered ten different kinds of tropical fish from a local store and studied their movements to imitate them on screen using computer animation . Jeff Goldman , the visual effects supervisor , stated " Early in the

sequence , we mimicked the actual behavior of the fish in our animation , but as the scene plays out , the fish are a counterpoint to Steve Carell 's comedic timing . "

= = Marketing = =

In late May during production , the media learned that director Tom Shadyac angrily complained to producers , saying " I 'm not seeing any ads , and I don 't know why . I 'm not getting answers . People are giving me information that isn 't true ... I 'm only hearing about all the other summer movies , and nothing about mine . " Shadyac also fired his marketing consultants that he had used for prior films due to his thoughts over the mishandling of the marketing . He later apologized for his outburst with producers , and claimed that it was as a result of his nervousness before the film 's release .

Grace Hill Media , a marketing firm that targets religious Americans , held exclusive screenings of the film in mid @-@ June in fifty cities in the United States to reach religious moviegoers . The firm was also used for marketing Bruce Almighty , The Da Vinci Code , and The Passion of the Christ . Grace Hill provided free screenings to blogs in exchange for publicity on the blogs . The film and its subsequent home video release was marketed to Christians and their churches through a " kindness campaign " called Ark ALMIGHTY .

The first trailer of the film premiered on March 29 , 2007 for a marathon of The Office , which also stars Steve Carell and Ed Helms . For online advertising , an eight @-@ minute clip of a scene was released on Yahoo ! two days before the release of the film . The premiere for the film was held on June 10 , 2007 and guests included Adam Sandler , David Hasselhoff , Kate Flannery , Eddie Murphy , Kevin James , and Mindy Kaling , among others .

= = Environmental impact = =

Director Tom Shadyac felt the film reflected environmental themes of how humans are stewards of God 's creation . In keeping with the themes , Evan Almighty became NBC Universal 's first film to offset the production 's carbon emissions . Producer Michael Bostick revealed how the emissions were offset :

" We worked closely with The Conservation Fund to calculate our carbon emissions from what we used on the movie ? whether from vehicles used or any of the construction equipment . Once our carbon emissions were calculated , we planted trees that will effectively zero out our climate @-@ changing footprint left behind from the movie . "

Shadyac accomplished this by requiring crew members to plant 2 @,@ 050 trees at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Warsaw , Virginia and the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge near Modesto , California . He also bought over 400 bikes for all the cast and crew , to get to work instead of driving . In addition , rather than simply demolishing sets , Shadyac tried to donate houses built for the production and had the Ark set recycled , by donating materials to Habitat for Humanity . During the premiere of the film for cast and crew at Universal Citywalk , the attendees were encouraged to donate to a campaign to plant trees in forests around the world . The after party used recycled cups and plates to offset the use of resources . Shadyac also required that when Industrial Light & Magic developed the climactic scene , that the CGI flood did not appear to harm any of the trees in the scene .

The film partnered with the website Get On Board Now , which focused on the importance of conservation during production of the film . Donations were taken at the website for The Conservation Fund , which paid for the planting of 15 @,@ 000 trees .

= = Animal welfare = =

The American Humane Association oversaw the 177 species of animals that were used in the film . In scenes including both predators and prey , the animals were digitally added instead to ensure their safety . The American Humane Association gave its permission for the film to display " No

animals were harmed in the making of this movie " over the closing credits .

Animal rights organization PETA accused the film 's producers of using animals that had previously been abused . Two chimpanzees who appear in the movie , Cody and Sable , were surrendered by their owner to settle a lawsuit that documented allegations of beatings and mistreatment . The film 's director , Tom Shadyac , said of PETA 's criticisms " They 're not wrong . There 's a certain amount of hypocrisy whenever you work with animals , even to show , which we hope we 're showing , that respect of all of God 's creation ... I don 't know . I respect their criticism . " PETA was also critical of Birds & Animals Unlimited , the primary animal supplier to the film , for alleged serious and continuing violations of the U.S. Animal Welfare Act , including failure to comply with veterinary care requirements and failure to provide shelter from heat and sunlight , which PETA details and claims it can document . A Universal Studios spokesperson declared :

" The live animals used in the filming of Evan Almighty were supplemented by a great number of computer @-@ generated animals , but it would have been impossible to depend on CGI exclusively as some key scenes in the film demonstrate the need for peaceful and productive co @-@ existence between man and animals . One of the most prominent , inescapable messages of the film is the responsibility that humans have to protect and care for animals . "

= = Release = =

= = = Home media = = =

The film was released on HD DVD and DVD on October 9 , 2007 and was the fourth @-@ most rented DVD of the week earning \$ 6 @. @ 4 million . In the film 's first six weeks of release it earned \$ 27 @, @ 676 @, @ 676 in domestic DVD sales . The HD @-@ DVD and DVD 's special features include deleted scenes , outtakes , cast interviews , and footage of the animals used in the film . The film was released on Blu @-@ ray on August 7 , 2012 .

= = = Proposed ban = = =

Malaysia 's Muslim Consumers Association (PPIM) called for a ban on the film , claiming it is offensive to Islam . Secretary @-@ General Maamor Osman claimed that the film was depicting the great flood as comedy and characterized God with the portrayal of a human , both of which are considered blasphemous in Islam . Similarly there was some public protest against Bruce Almighty being shown in theaters , but that movie was released on DVD and is now shown on television broadcasts . Evan Almighty was still released in Malaysia on August 23 , 2007 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical release = = =

Evan Almighty received generally negative reviews from critics and viewers . On review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes , the film has an approval rating of 23 % , based on 192 reviews , with the critical consensus reading , " Big on special effects but short on laughs , Evan Almighty underutilizes a star @-@ studded cast that includes Steve Carell and Morgan Freeman . " At the website Metacritic , which utilizes a normalized rating system , the film earned a score of 37 out of 100 , based on 33 critics , indicating " generally unfavorable reviews " .

In his review of the film , Richard Roeper commended Jim Carrey for declining to reprise his role in " three of the worst sequels of all time " , which included Dumb and Dumberer : When Harry Met Lloyd , Son of the Mask and Evan Almighty . He continued : " Evan Almighty is a paper @-@ thin alleged comedy with a laugh drought of biblical proportions , and a condescendingly simplistic spiritual message . "

Several reviewers credit Carell 's performance to significantly improving the humor of the film . Peter Travers of Rolling Stone declared the film the year 's Worst Epic on his list of the Worst Movies of 2007 . Before Evan Almighty was released , it was nominated for " Best Summer Movie You Haven 't Seen Yet " at the 2007 MTV Movie Awards . Competing against seven other nominees , it lost to Transformers . According to box office figures , the film is the second highest @-@ grossing film about " Supernatural Comedies with Religious Elements " according to Box Office Mojo , directly behind Bruce Almighty . Evan Almighty was nominated for one Razzie Award , Worst Prequel or Sequel (lost to Daddy Day Camp) .

= = = Box office = = =

Though Evan Almighty was hyped up , especially with churchgoers , and had double the budget of Bruce Almighty , it performed under expectations . On its first weekend , it opened in 5 @, @ 200 screens in 3 @, @ 604 theaters and earned \$ 31 @. @ 1 million (on its first two days the film earned \$ 11 @. @ 4 million followed by \$ 8 @. @ 3 million on Sunday) . The opening was less than half of the first film 's \$ 68 million weekend (\$ 85 million counting Memorial Day) . Nikki Rocco , the president of distribution for Universal Pictures declared , " We never expected it to be much higher ... it is not unusual for family films to open at a level like this and build . This film will have legs . " The film managed to remain at the third spot at the box office in its second week , before dropping to fifth place in its third week .

Internationally , the film also opened in first place in Russia and Ukraine , earning \$ 1 @. @ 5 million in Russia with 329 venues and \$ 179 @, @ 000 in Ukraine at 64 locations . The gross in the opening weekends for the two countries was 10 % and 11 % , respectively , bigger than the opening for Bruce Almighty . Altogether , the film has earned \$ 173 @, @ 391 @, @ 888 worldwide with \$ 100 @, @ 462 @, @ 298 in the U.S. and \$ 72 @, @ 929 @, @ 590 in the international box office .

= = Soundtrack = =

Evan Almighty : Music from and Inspired by the Motion Picture debuted in 2007 . The soundtrack debuted on June 19 , 2007 . " Revolution " was performed by Rascal Flatts in the film . Their version is not on the soundtrack , but it appears as a bonus track on their album Still Feels Good . Also not included on the soundtrack are Elton John 's 2006 hit , " Just Like Noah 's Ark " of which only a little bit is heard during the start of building the ark , and John Mayer 's " Waiting on the World to Change " , used in the main ark @-@ building montage . " Ready For a Miracle " was released as a single for the soundtrack by American country pop recording artist , LeAnn Rimes .

Rascal Flatts ' version of " Revolution " peaked at number 57 on the Hot Country Songs charts , and " The Power of One " by Bomshel reached number 52 on the same .

Note : Tracks one , two and fourteen to sixteen are taken from the film while tracks three through thirteen are inspired by the film .

= = = Accolades = = =

In 2008 , the soundtrack was nominated for a Dove Award for Special Event Album of the Year at the 39th GMA Dove Awards . The song " Be the Miracle " by Room for Two was also nominated for Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year while " Ready for a Miracle " by LeAnn Rimes won the Dove Award for Traditional Gospel Recorded Song of the Year .