

= The Call (2013 film) =

The Call is a 2013 American crime thriller film directed by Brad Anderson and written by Richard D 'Ovidio . The film stars Abigail Breslin as Casey Welson , a teenage girl kidnapped by a serial killer and Halle Berry as Jordan Turner , a 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 operator , still suffering emotionally from a prior botched 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 call , who receives Casey 's call . Morris Chestnut , Michael Eklund , Michael Imperioli , and David Otunga also star . The story was originally envisioned as a television series , but D 'Ovidio later rewrote it as a 94 @-@ minute feature film . Filming began in July 2012 and spanned a period of 25 days , with all scenes being shot in Los Angeles , mainly Burbank and Santa Clarita .

A screening of The Call was held at the Women 's International Film Festival hosted at the Regal South Beach theater on February 26 , 2013 . TriStar Pictures released it to theatres a few weeks later on March 15 , 2013 . Considered to be high @-@ concept by many reviewers , the film proved a commercial success , grossing over \$ 68 million against budget of \$ 13 million . Halle Berry was nominated for Choice Movie Actress in a Drama at the Teen Choice Awards and Best Actress at the BET Awards and the film received generally mixed reviews from critics , but praised Berry 's performance and the film 's suspense .

= = Plot = =

A Los Angeles Police Department veteran 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 operator , Jordan Turner (Berry) , receives a call one night from a teenage girl , Leah Templeton (Evie Thompson) , fearing for her life as a man breaks into her home . Jordan calmly advises her to conceal herself upstairs , but when the call is disconnected , Jordan calls Leah back , a decision that later costs Leah her life , as the ringing phone gives her location away to the intruder . Jordan attempts to dissuade him from going further over the phone . He responds " It 's already done " and hangs up , leaving her distraught . The next day , Jordan sees a television report confirming that Leah has been murdered . Emotionally affected by the incident , Jordan tells her boyfriend , Officer Paul Phillips (Morris Chestnut) , that she can no longer handle field calls .

Six months later , she is working as a trainer for 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 operators . Simultaneously , teenager Casey Welson (Breslin) is kidnapped from a mall parking garage after parting with her friend , Autumn , and forced into the trunk of a car . Casey had taken Autumn 's disposable phone , and uses it to call 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 . A rookie operator (Jenna Lamia) receives the call but is unable to handle it , prompting Jordan to take over , though Casey 's use of a disposable phone means that her exact GPS location cannot be found . While the kidnapper drives , Jordan guides Casey through knocking out a tail light and signaling people in nearby cars . One woman who sees Casey waving her arm out of the trunk of the car calls 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 , allowing the police to narrow their search . When Casey tells Jordan that there are cans of paint in the trunk , Jordan has Casey pour the paint out of the taillight hole , attracting the attention of another motorist , Alan Denado (Michael Imperioli) but the kidnapper knocks him out with a shovel , assuming him to be dead and stuffs Alan in the trunk with Casey . He reawakens in the trunk and begins screaming uncontrollably , which causes the kidnapper to stab him . He stops at a gas station where Casey gets an idea to crawl out of the trunk and scream at an active worker for help . The worker attempts to bust the door open , but the kidnapper sprays him with gasoline and throws a lighter at him .

Upon arriving at his destination , the kidnapper , Michael Foster (Michael Eklund) , removes Casey from the trunk and finds the phone in her pocket , with 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 listening on the line . Through the phone , Jordan informs him that his identity is uncovered and advises him to turn himself in and not hurt the girl . Before smashing the phone , Michael responds , " It 's already done " and Jordan realizes that Michael is the same culprit who killed Leah six months prior . Meanwhile , Phillips , accompanied by Officer Jake Devans (David Otunga) and others in law enforcement , raid Michael 's home , but find only his wife and children . Finding a photo of Michael and his sister , Melinda , they realize that Casey resembles the latter . Additionally , the house seen in the photo is eventually revealed by Michael 's wife to have burned down , although a nearby cottage still remains

. The police raid it , but find nobody there and leave . Michael begins to wash and cut Casey 's hair . Determined to rescue Casey , Jordan drives to the secondary home where she finds a number of photos of Michael with his leukemia @-@ stricken sister . Stepping outside , she recognizes sounds from an outdoor flagpole , reminiscent of sounds heard in the background in the final moments of the 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 call . She also finds a trap door amid dirt and scrub located where the primary house once stood . After she accidentally drops her cellphone down the cellar , she climbs down in without calling the police .

Navigating the cellar , Jordan hides from an emerging Michael . The cellar itself pieces together Michael 's backstory . Michael had incestuous feelings towards his sister and was distraught when she fell ill , lost all of her hair and died of leukemia . Foster has a prop head that he keeps in the cellar that he treats like his sister . He has also been scalping and killing young girls who have similar blond hair , trying to find scalps that match his sister 's hair . Jordan soon finds Casey strapped down to a dentist chair and attacks Michael , as he begins to lacerate Casey 's scalp . She frees Casey and both manage to gradually escape the cellar , and Casey stabs Michael in the back with a pair of scissors . Michael pursues them and they are able to injure and kick him back down into the cellar , rendering him unconscious . While he is knocked out , they tie him to a chair . When he regains consciousness , they inform him that they plan to leave him to die and claim that Casey had escaped , was found by Jordan in the woods , and that Michael disappeared . Pleading with them that they cannot just leave him there , Jordan replies to Foster using his own words , " It 's already done , " and as he shouts insults at them locks the door , avenges Leah 's death and leaves .

= = Cast = =

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and casting = = =

Screenwriter Richard D 'Ovidio was inspired to script the story after his wife heard an NPR segment with a 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 operator discussing her job . He began to research the subject and visited the Los Angeles Metropolitan Communications Dispatch Center (MCDCC) . Finding the center , which has backup generators , bulletproof windows , and a moat surrounding the building , to be " pretty amazing , " he decided to shed light on what he viewed as a previously overlooked occupation . The story was originally conceptualized as a television series entitled The Hive (a reference to the constant calls and conversations sounding like bees buzzing) , but D 'Ovidio decided to redraft it as a film on realizing that " the operators couldn 't be the ones kicking in doors and going out into the field " all the time . As a result , what was planned to be the pilot episode was expanded and revised as a movie .

For most of the film , Berry 's character , Turner , the 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 operator , does stay inside " the hive " before becoming actively involved in the search for Breslin 's character , Welson , the kidnapped caller . D 'Ovidio chose two female leads , explaining , " I wanted strong women ... I think it was appropriate here , since most 911 call operators are women . " Berry remarked , " I love the idea of being a part of a movie that was so empowering for women . We don 't often get to play roles like this , where ordinary people become heroic and do something extraordinary . " D 'Ovidio chose to tell the story from the perspective of two characters ? the operator and the caller ? believing that it would become repetitive if it focused on only one . As a result , he switched perspectives every ten pages when writing the screenplay . As well as collaborating on the story with his wife , Nicole and Jon Bokenkamp , he accepted suggestions from Berry , Breslin and Eklund : " Halle came in with some great notes and Abigail and Michael and it started to flesh things out . I 'm not one to say ' no ' to a great suggested line of dialogue . It just makes me look better as a writer ! I feel it 's a very collaborative process , and some of the happiest accidents happen when you just listen to people .

When someone comes up to you and says , ' Why don 't we do it this way ? ' I think that it 's important to listen . "

Chestnut , who plays Phillips , a police officer and Turner 's boyfriend , prepared by riding along with Los Angeles police officers to observe what it is like to be an officer in a squad car and Berry prepared for the role by visiting a call center and observing the operators at work . She told a Miami Herald interviewer , " You get a different perspective by doing research ... You can 't know what it 's like to be a cop even though you 've seen it in the movies . But nobody ever saw a 9 @-@ 1 @-@ 1 center . I thought they lived in the ground somewhere ! It was interesting to see who they were and how they deal and how stressful it can be . I was a wreck watching them . They would just be as cool as can be doing their thing . I thought , ' I could never do this job . ' "

= = = Filming = = =

Producers scheduled for The Call to be filmed in Canada in June 2011 after they failed to make the cut for a California tax credit . With a low budget of \$ 13 million , they settled on Ottawa , Ontario , where director Anderson had just finished another project . However , the California Film Commission (CFC) called back nine months later and informed them that the waiting list had been largely cleared and that they now qualified for \$ 1 @.@ 9 million in tax deduction . According to Producer Michael Helfant , they were " literally days from starting to put down a deposit . " Berry was reportedly pleased with the news , having wanted to stay in Los Angeles and the CFC helped secure film locations for the project .

With a crew of roughly 120 persons , filming took a total of 25 days , spanning from July to August 2012 . Car chase scenes were shot at Long Beach and a Westlake Village office building was modeled as the emergency dispatch center . The latter was also used for the scenes in which Welson is locked in the trunk of a car . Other filming locations include the Burbank Town Center on Magnolia Boulevard in Burbank , California , Santa Clarita , California and the 170 Highway . At one point , Berry was rushed to Cedars @-@ Sinai Medical Center after falling headfirst on concrete while shooting a fight sequence . A spokesperson for Berry confirmed that she suffered a minor head injury and was taken to the hospital as a precaution , but she checked out healthy and was released .

Berry told interviewer Kimberly Grant , " The hard part for me was to try to stay connected to Phillips and Welson . " This was because , Grant writes , " she had to spend an entire day reading 21 pages of dialogue , rattling off in quick succession 911 @-@ operator jargon , that would be cut and edited to fit the film ... In film terms , that means Berry performed for 21 minutes straight with no breaks , not an easy feat for any actor . " Though she enjoyed working with Chestnut , Berry told Grant that it was difficult being unable to see her co @-@ stars for most of the film : " That was my constant challenge ; to stay on such an emotional level [as Jordan] , so that I would be on the same level as they [i.e. , Casey and Officer Phillips] were . I used that feeling of frustration and of being stuck to fuel my character . "

= = Promotion and release = =

Spanning 94 minutes upon completion , the movie received an R rating for violence , disturbing content and some language . Berry and Chestnut promoted the film at the ShowPlace ICON movie theater at the red @-@ carpet premiere in Chicago on February 28 . Berry also traveled to Rio to promote The Call in anticipation of its April 12 release in Brazil .

The Women 's International Film Festival hosted a screening of The Call at the Regal South Beach theater on February 26 , 2013 . Chestnut told the audience that he would sign on for a sequel , saying about Berry , " I didn 't get to kiss this woman enough ! " Berry added , " I 'm in the movie and even I was scared . " The film was released in theatres on March 15 and on DVD and Blu @-@ ray Disc on June 25 of that same year . DVD extras included a featurette entitled " Emergency Procedure : Making the Film " and commentary from Abigail Breslin , Halle Berry , and other filmmakers . The Blu @-@ ray version came with more features , including deleted scenes , an

alternate ending , Michael Eklund 's audition tape , featurettes entitled " A Set Tour of The Hive and The Lair " and " Inside the Stunts " , as well as all of the original DVD content .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

According to Boxoffice , The Call was expected to earn about \$ 11 ? 12 million on its opening weekend in 2 @, @ 507 theaters across the United States but surpassed this by a significant margin and grossed \$ 17 million in its first three days . This indicated good profits , as the film cost about \$ 13 million to produce and TriStar Pictures paid a much smaller amount to acquire U.S. distribution rights . With box office takings of over \$ 68 million , The Call is WWE Studios ' most commercially successful film to date , the previous top @-@ grossing productions being See No Evil , which stars professional wrestler Kane (Glenn Jacobs) (\$ 19 million) and 12 Rounds , which stars professional wrestler John Cena (\$ 17 million) .

Critics were surprised by the movie 's success because " Berry hadn 't had a hit in a number of years " and because the R rating narrowed down the audience . WWE Studios head Michael Luisi commented that The Call " [exceeded] our most optimistic forecasts . "

= = = Critical response = = =

The Call has received mostly mixed reviews from critics , having a 44 % overall film rating review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes based on 124 reviews with the consensus : " The Call builds plenty of suspense before taking a problematic turn in the third act . " Entertainment Weekly gave the film a B rating , saying that the tale " is surprisingly good and surprisingly gruesome fun . Eklund makes the most of the maniac role and Breslin is a sympathetic victim . " Similarly , Metacritic , another film review aggregator , gave the movie a 51 out of 100 based on 23 reviews . Reviewer Dwight Brown wrote , " The script gives Berry a blue @-@ collar character she can make accessible , vulnerable and gutsy ... Chestnut is not suitably gallant and stalwart as her caring lover and a cop on a mission ... This film is a whole lot scarier than you think it 's going to be . " Manohla Dargis of The New York Times wrote , " An effectively creepy thriller about a 911 operator and a young miss in peril , The Call is a model of low @-@ budget filmmaking . " She praised its " clean , clever premise " and said that Berry 's Jordan is " an old @-@ fashioned hero in many respects , so it 's fitting that Mr. Anderson uses old @-@ fashioned filmmaking techniques , like crosscutting , to build tension and old @-@ school exploitation tricks like evil to justify taking the story dark and then dark and bonkers . "

A reviewer for The Hutchinson News , Jake Coyle , commented , " Director Brad Anderson ... working from the simple , high @-@ concept screenplay by Richard D 'Ovidio , ably cuts between Berry 's increasingly emotionally @-@ attached Jordan Turner and Breslin 's panicking Casey Welson , contrasting the fraught strategizing of Turner with the frantic police pursuit of the kidnapper . " Coyle stated that " The Call dials up a shallow thrill ride , but one efficiently peppered with your typical ' don 't go in there ! ' moments , " but concluded , " The Call is a rudimentary , almost old @-@ fashioned 90 @-@ minute escape that manages to achieve its low ambitions . " Rating the film 2 stars out of 4 , Coyle writes that once the film " manages to build some suspense from the trunk of the car-- the clever attempts to elicit help , the dwindling cell phone battery-- its deficiencies become less forgivable once the action turns off the road . "

Roger Moore of The Seattle Times showed mixed feelings in his review : " Rare is the thriller that goes as completely and utterly wrong as The Call does at almost precisely the one @-@ hour mark . Which is a crying shame , because for an hour this is a riveting , by @-@ the @-@ book kidnapping . " Moore explained what he saw as the highs and lows : " Brad Anderson turns this ... serial @-@ killer hunt ... into a real edge @-@ of @-@ your @-@ seat thriller . Given ... a half @-@ decent tale of horror , guilt , problem @-@ solving and redemption , Anderson couldn 't go far wrong

, " but , Moore states , " It 's only when our Oscar @-@ winning heroine puts down the phone and sets out to do some sleuthing of her own that The Call disconnects , turning into something far more generic and far less exciting . " The Los Angeles Times turned in a similar review : " The semi @-@ fresh thriller , set mainly in an emergency call center and on the freeways of Los Angeles , puts a tech slant on a damsel @-@ in @-@ distress setup . It buzzes along for a while , the promising plot innovations inviting suspension of disbelief , before by @-@ the @-@ numbers implausibility , over @-@ the @-@ top valor and unsavory contrivances take over and the line goes dead . "

= = = Accolades = = =

Berry was nominated for two awards for her role as Turner in The Call in 2013 . She was nominated for Best Actress for the BET Awards , which were created by the Black Entertainment Television network to celebrate African Americans and other minorities in music , acting , sports and other fields of entertainment over the past year , Berry lost to Kerry Washington for the role in Django Unchained . She was also nominated for Choice Movie Actress in a Drama at the Teen Choice Awards , but lost to Emma Watson for The Perks of Being a Wallflower .

The film was also nominated for Best Thriller Film at the 40th Saturn Awards and Berry was nominated for Saturn Award for Best Actress , but lost to World War Z and Sandra Bullock

= = Possible sequel = =

WWE Studios head Michael Luisi confirmed the possibility of a sequel , though no new information has been released since the announcement in 2013 .