

= Watchmen ( film ) =

Watchmen is a 2009 American epic neo @-@ noir superhero film directed by Zack Snyder , based on the 1986 ? 87 DC Comics limited series of the same name by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons . It stars an ensemble cast of Malin Åkerman , Billy Crudup , Matthew Goode , Carla Gugino , Jackie Earle Haley , Jeffrey Dean Morgan , and Patrick Wilson . A dark satirical take on the superhero genre , the film is set in an alternate history in the year 1985 at the height of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union , as a group of mostly retired American superheroes investigates the murder of one of their own before uncovering an elaborate and deadly conspiracy , while their moral limitations are challenged by the complex nature of the circumstances .

From October 1987 until October 2005 , a live @-@ action film adaptation became stranded in development hell : Producer Lawrence Gordon began developing the project at 20th Century Fox and Warner Bros. , parent company of Watchmen publisher DC Comics , with producer Joel Silver and director Terry Gilliam , the latter eventually deeming the complex comic " un @-@ filmable " ; During the 2000s , Gordon and Lloyd Levin collaborated with Universal Studios and Paramount Pictures to produce a script by David Hayter ; Darren Aronofsky and Paul Greengrass were also attached to the project before it was canceled over budget disputes ; and , in October 2005 , the project returned to Warner Bros. , where Snyder was hired to direct ? Paramount remained as international distributor . Fox sued Warner Bros for copyright violation arising from Gordon 's failure to pay a buy @-@ out in 1991 , which enabled him to develop the film at the other studios . Fox and Warner Bros settled this before the film 's release with Fox receiving a portion of the gross . Principal photography began in Vancouver , September 2007 . As with his previous film 300 , Snyder closely modelled his storyboards on the comic , but chose not to shoot all of Watchmen using green screens and opted for real sets instead .

Following its world premiere at Odeon Leicester Square on February 23 , 2009 , the film was released in both conventional and IMAX theaters on March 6 , 2009 , grossing \$ 55 million on the opening weekend , and over \$ 185 million at the worldwide box office . The film 's reception has been polarized between positive and negative reactions .

A DVD based on elements of the Watchmen universe was released , including an animated adaptation of the comic Tales of the Black Freighter within the story , starring Gerard Butler , and the fictional biography Under the Hood , detailing the older generation of superheroes from the film 's back @-@ story . A director 's cut with 24 minutes of additional footage was released in July 2009 . The " Ultimate Cut " edition incorporated the Tales of the Black Freighter content into the narrative as it was in the original graphic novel , lengthening the runtime to 215 minutes , and was released on November 3 , 2009 .

= = Plot = =

The " Minutemen , " a team of costumed crime fighters , was formed in 1939 in response to a rise in costumed gangs and criminals ; the " Watchmen " was similarly formed decades later . Their existence has dramatically affected world events : Doctor Manhattan 's powers have helped the United States win the Vietnam War , and given the West a strategic advantage over the Soviet Union , which by 1985 threatens to escalate the Cold War into a nuclear war . Growing anti @-@ vigilante sentiment leads to masked crime @-@ fighters being outlawed . While many of the heroes retire , Dr Manhattan and The Comedian operate as government @-@ sanctioned agents , and Rorschach continues to operate outside the law .

While investigating the murder of government agent Edward Blake , Rorschach discovers that Blake was the Comedian , and theorizes that someone may be attempting to eliminate former costumed heroes . He warns his retired comrades ? Daniel Dreiberg ( Nite Owl II ) , Dr Manhattan , and the latter 's lover Laurie Jupiter ( Silk Spectre II ) . Dr Manhattan ignores Rorschach , and Dreiberg is skeptical , but relays this information to vigilante @-@ turned @-@ billionaire Adrian Veidt ( Ozymandias ) , who also dismisses it .

Following a backlash , Dr Manhattan exiles himself to Mars , giving the Soviet Union the confidence

to invade Afghanistan . Rorschach 's theory appears to be justified when Veidt narrowly avoids an assassination attempt , and Rorschach finds himself framed for the murder of a former villain named Moloch . When Rorschach is arrested , his identity is revealed to be Walter Kovacs , and he is sent to jail . Jupiter goes to stay with Dreiberg after breaking up with Manhattan . The two become lovers and decide to come out of retirement . After helping Rorschach break out of prison , Jupiter is confronted by Manhattan , who transports her to Mars . As he probes her memories , he discovers that she is Blake 's daughter , and realizes the miracle of her life , created in spite of her parents ' turbulent relationship . He then returns to Earth with her .

Investigating the conspiracy , Rorschach and Dreiberg discover that Veidt is behind everything . Rorschach records his suspicions in his journal , which he drops off at the publication office of the New Frontiersman , a right @-@ wing tabloid . Rorschach and Dreiberg confront Veidt at his Antarctic retreat . Veidt admits to being responsible for Blake 's murder , Manhattan 's exile , Rorschach 's framing , and his own assassination attempt , which he staged to divert suspicion . He explains that his plan is to unify the United States and the Soviet Union by destroying the world 's main cities with exploding energy reactors infused with energy from Manhattan . Rorschach and Dreiberg attempt to stop him , but Veidt subdues them both and reveals that his plan has already been set into motion : the reactors have been detonated , and the energy signatures are recognized as Manhattan 's .

Jupiter and Manhattan arrive in a destroyed New York City and determine that Veidt is responsible . They teleport to his base , causing him to retreat and attempt to kill Manhattan . Unsuccessful , he shows them a televised news report in which Nixon states that the United States and Soviet Union have allied against their new " common enemy " : Dr Manhattan . Although his allies realize that revealing the truth would only disrupt this new peace , Rorschach , refuses to compromise , and attempts to return to America to expose Veidt . Manhattan intervenes , and Rorschach demands that Manhattan kill him to keep him from revealing the truth . Manhattan complies .

Manhattan shares a final kiss with Jupiter before departing permanently to another galaxy , while an enraged Dreiberg attacks Veidt , who makes no effort to defend himself . Nevertheless , he defends his actions , claiming that for world peace to be possible , there had to be sacrifice . Dreiberg rejects his logic declaring that Veidt has deformed and mutilated humanity . Dreiberg and Jupiter return to New York with plans to continue fighting crime . Later , an editor of the New Frontiersman tells a young employee that , as the world is at peace , there is nothing to report on . The editor gives the employee permission to print the contents of a collection of crank mailings , among which is Rorschach 's journal .

= = Cast and characters = =

Production for Watchmen began casting in July 2007 for look @-@ alike of the era 's famous names for the film ? something Snyder declared would give the film a " satirical quality " and " create this ? 80s vibe " ? including Richard Nixon , Leonid Brezhnev , Henry Kissinger , H. R. Haldeman , Ted Koppel , John McLaughlin , Annie Leibovitz , John Lennon and Yoko Ono , Fidel Castro , Albert Einstein , Norman Rockwell , John F. Kennedy and Jackie Kennedy , Andy Warhol , Truman Capote , Elvis Presley , Mao Zedong , Larry King , David Bowie , Mick Jagger , Lee Iacocca , and the Village People . Snyder said he wanted younger actors because of the many flashback scenes , and it was easier to age actors with make @-@ up rather than cast two actors in the same role . Snyder 's son cameos as a young Rorschach , while the director himself appears as an American soldier in Vietnam . Actor Thomas Jane was invited by Snyder , but declined to work in the film due to being too busy .

Jackie Earle Haley as Walter Kovacs / Rorschach : A masked vigilante who continues his extralegal activities after they are outlawed . He takes his name from the Rorschach test , as the shifting black @-@ and @-@ white patterns on his mask resemble its inkblots . Unlike the principal actors , Haley had read the comic as a young adult and was keen to pursue the role when he heard he had become a favorite candidate among fans . Rorschach wears a mask with ink blots : motion capture markers were put on the contours of Haley 's blank mask , for animators to create his ever @-@

changing expressions . Haley has a black belt in Kenpo , but described Rorschach 's attack patterns as sloppier and more aggressive due to the character 's boxing background . Rorschach appears several times in the movie without his mask before he is apprehended , carrying a placard sign proclaiming , " The End is Nigh , " but not until he is unmasked by the police is it made apparent that the sign bearer is Rorschach .

Eli Snyder as young Walter Kovacs

Patrick Wilson as Daniel Dreiberg / Nite Owl II : A retired superhero with technological expertise . Snyder cast Wilson after watching 2006 's Little Children , which also co -@-@ starred Haley . Wilson put on 25 lbs. to play the overweight Dreiberg . He compared Dreiberg to a soldier who returns from war unable to fit into society . Both Joaquin Phoenix and John Cusack ( another fan of the novel ) were involved in previous attempts at making the film .

Billy Crudup as Jon Osterman / Dr. Manhattan : A superhero with genuine superpowers who works for the U.S. government . Crudup plays Osterman in flashbacks as a human and is replaced for his post @-@ accident scenes with a motion @-@ capture CG version of himself . During filming , Crudup acted opposite his co @-@ stars , wearing a white suit covered in blue LEDs , so he would give off an otherworldly glow in real life , just as the computer @-@ generated Manhattan does in the movie . His body was modeled on that of fitness model and actor Greg Plitt . The crew then 3D @-@ digitized Crudup 's head and " frankensteined it onto Greg Plitt 's body . " Snyder chose not to electronically alter Crudup 's voice for Manhattan , explaining the character " would try and put everyone as much at ease as he could , instead of having a robotic voice that I think would feel off @-@ putting . "

Jaryd Heidrick as young Jon Osterman

Malin Åkerman as Laurie Jupiter / Silk Spectre II : Åkerman described her character as the psychology and the emotion of the film due to being the only woman among the men . The actress worked out and trained to fight for her portrayal of the crime fighter .

Haley Guiel as young Laurie Jupiter

Jeffrey Dean Morgan as Edward Morgan Blake / The Comedian : A superhero who is commissioned by the U.S. government as a black @-@ ops specialist . When reading the comic for the part , Morgan stopped when he saw his character was killed off three pages in . When telling his agent he did not want the part , he was told to continue reading it and find out how important his character was . Morgan found the role a challenge , explaining , " For some reason , in reading the novel , you don 't hate this guy even though he does things that are unmentionable . [ ... ] My job is to kind of make that translate , so as a viewer you end up not making excuses to like him , but you don 't hate him like you should for doing the things that he does . " Of his casting , Snyder said , " It 's hard to find a man 's man in Hollywood . It just is . And Jeffrey came in and was grumpy and cool and grizzled , and I was , like , ' OK , Jeffrey is perfect ! ' "

Matthew Goode as Adrian Veidt / Ozymandias : A retired superhero who has since made his identity public . At first Snyder wanted Jude Law ( a big fan of the character ) for the part , but said that Goode was " big and tall and lean , " which aided in bringing " this beautiful ageless , German superman " feel to the character . Goode interpreted Veidt 's back @-@ story to portray him with a German accent in private and an American one in public ; Goode explained Veidt gave up his family 's wealth and traveled the world , becoming a self @-@ made man because he was ashamed of his parents ' Nazi past , which in turn highlighted the themes of the American Dream and the character 's duality . Snyder said Goode " fit the bill .... We were having a hard time casting [ the role ] , because we needed someone handsome , beautiful and sophisticated , and that 's a tough combo . "

Carla Gugino as Sally Jupiter / Silk Spectre : A retired superheroine , mother of Laurie Juspeckzyk , former member of the now @-@ defunct superhero team , The Minutemen , and the first Silk Spectre . Gugino 's character ages from 25 years old in the 1940s to 67 years old in the 1980s , and the 37 @-@ year @-@ old actress wore prosthetics to reflect the aging process . Gugino described her character 's superhero outfit as " Bettie Page meets Alberto Vargas . "

Dan Payne as William Brady / Dollar Bill : A deceased member of the now @-@ defunct superhero team , The Minutemen . Brady was a bank @-@ sponsored member of The Minutemen who was

created for publicity purposes . He dies during a bank robbery in 1947 when his cape is caught in the bank 's revolving doors , allowing the robbers to shoot him at point @-@ blank range .

Niall Matter as Byron Lewis / Mothman : A former member of the now @-@ defunct superhero team , The Minutemen . Lewis had a privileged upbringing and sought to help the less fortunate and fight oppression and corruption as a crime @-@ fighter . To this end Lewis created a costume with special wings that helped him glide . His mental stability ultimately deteriorated after he was called before HUAC , leading to him being forcibly brought to a mental asylum .

Apollonia Vanova as Ursula Zandt / The Silhouette : A deceased member of the now @-@ defunct superhero team , The Minutemen . A gun @-@ toting vigilante , motivated by the deaths of her parents and sister at the hands of the Nazis in their native Austria . Zandt is killed along with her lesbian lover in what is implied to be a hate @-@ crime .

Glenn Ennis as Jacob Müller / Hooded Justice : A deceased former member of the now @-@ defunct superhero team , The Minutemen . H.J. was a violent vigilante , who was trained in hand @-@ to @-@ hand combat .

Darryl Scheelar as Nelson Gardner / Captain Metropolis : A retired former member and leader of the now @-@ defunct superhero team , The Minutemen . A former Marine Lieutenant . He was one of the more active members of the Minutemen , having organized its formation . He died in a car accident in 1974 that left him decapitated , and is believed by some to be a form of suicide .

Stephen McHattie as Hollis Mason / Nite Owl : A retired former member of the now @-@ defunct superhero team The Minutemen . Mason now works in an auto shop .

Clint Carleton as young Hollis Mason / Nite Owl : Carleton appears in The Minutemen flashback scenes only .

Matt Frewer as Edgar Jacobi / Moloch : A former supervillain . Moloch was jailed for a time during the 1970s . He is dying of cancer which he received from Adrian Veidt . Moloch was later murdered by Adrian who frames Rorschach .

Mike Carpenter as young Edgar Jacobi / Moloch

Danny Woodburn as Big Figure : A jailed dwarfish crime boss and former adversary of Nite Owl and Rorschach . He tries to get revenge when Rorschach is imprisoned in the same jail as he is .

Robert Wisden as President Richard Nixon

= = Production = =

In 1986 , producers Lawrence Gordon and Joel Silver acquired film rights to Watchmen for 20th Century Fox . After author Alan Moore declined to write a screenplay based on his story , Fox enlisted screenwriter Sam Hamm . Hamm took the liberty of re @-@ writing Watchmen 's complicated ending into a " more manageable " conclusion involving an assassination and a time paradox . Fox put the project into turnaround in 1991 , and the project was moved to Warner Bros. , where Terry Gilliam was attached to direct and Charles McKeown to rewrite it . Due to lack of funding ? Gilliam and Silver were only able to raise \$ 25 million for the film ( a quarter of the necessary budget ) because their previous films had gone overbudget ? and Gilliam 's belief that the comic would have been unfilmable , Gilliam eventually left Watchmen and Warner Bros. dropped the project .

In October 2001 , Gordon partnered with Lloyd Levin and Universal Studios , hiring David Hayter to write and direct . Hayter and the producers left Universal due to creative differences , and Gordon and Levin expressed interest in setting up Watchmen at Revolution Studios . The project did not hold together at Revolution Studios and subsequently fell apart . In July 2004 , it was announced Paramount Pictures would produce Watchmen , and Michael Bay was considered to direct . Eventually , they attached Darren Aronofsky to direct Hayter 's script . Producers Gordon and Levin remained attached , collaborating with Aronofsky 's producing partner , Eric Watson . Paul Greengrass replaced Aronofsky when he left to focus on The Fountain . Ultimately , Paramount placed Watchmen in turnaround .

In October 2005 , Gordon and Levin met with Warner Bros. to develop the film there again . Tim Burton at one point expressed interest in directing the film but ultimately turned it down . Impressed

with Zack Snyder 's work on 300 , Warner Bros. approached him to direct an adaptation of Watchmen . Screenwriter Alex Tse drew from his favorite elements of Hayter 's script , but also returned it to the original Cold War setting of the Watchmen comic . Similar to his approach to 300 , Snyder used the comic book as a storyboard . Following negotiations , Paramount , which had already spent \$ 7 million in their failed project , earned the rights for international distribution of Watchmen and 25 % of the film 's ownership .

The fight scenes were extended , and a subplot about energy resources was added to make the film more topical . Although he intended to stay faithful to the look of the characters in the comic , Snyder intended Nite Owl to look scarier , and made Ozymandias ' armor into a parody of the rubber muscle suits from 1997 's Batman & Robin . Production took place in Vancouver , where a New York City back lot was built . Sound stages were used for apartments and offices , while sequences on Mars and Antarctica were shot against green screens . Filming started on September 17 , 2007 , and ended on February 19 , 2008 , on an estimated \$ 120 million budget . To handle the 1 @, @ 100 shots featuring visual effects , a quarter of them being computer @-@ generated imagery , ten different effects companies were involved with Watchmen . While 20th Century Fox filed a lawsuit to block the film 's release , the studios eventually settled , and Fox received an upfront payment and a percentage of the worldwide gross from the film and all sequels and spin @-@ offs in return .

Dave Gibbons became an adviser on Snyder 's film , but Moore has refused to have his name attached to any film adaptations of his work . Moore has stated he has no interest in seeing Snyder 's adaptation ; he told Entertainment Weekly in 2008 , " There are things that we did with Watchmen that could only work in a comic , and were indeed designed to show off things that other media can 't . " While Moore believes that David Hayter 's screenplay was " as close as I could imagine anyone getting to Watchmen , " he asserted he did not intend to see the film if it were made .

= = Music = =

Both a soundtrack and excerpts from Tyler Bates ' film score were released as albums on March 3 , 2009 . The soundtrack features three songs written by Bob Dylan ? " Desolation Row " , " All Along the Watchtower " and " The Times They Are a @-@ Changin ' " ? with only the latter performed by Dylan on the soundtrack . It includes some songs mentioned in the comic , such as Simon and Garfunkel 's " The Sound of Silence " and Leonard Cohen 's " Hallelujah " . Dylan 's " The Times They Are a @-@ Changin ' " and " All Along the Watchtower " are also quoted in the graphic novel . Music by Philip Glass from Koyaanisqatsi plays when Dr. Manhattan is looking back on his life when he arrives on Mars . The Introitus of Mozart 's Requiem appears at the end of the film . " Desolation Row " was covered by My Chemical Romance especially for the film , and the song plays in the end credits .

= = Release = =

= = = Marketing = = =

Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment published a USA @-@ only episodic video game to be released alongside the film called Watchmen : The End Is Nigh . Warner Bros. took this low @-@ key approach to avoid rushing the game on such a tight schedule , as most games adapted from films are panned by critics and consumers . The game is set in the 1970s , and is written by Len Wein , the comic 's editor ; Dave Gibbons is also an advisor . On March 4 , 2009 Glu Mobile released Watchmen : The Mobile Game , a beat ' em up mobile game featuring Nite Owl and The Comedian fighting enemies in their respective settings of New York City and Vietnam . On March 6 , 2009 , a game for the Apple Inc. iPhone and iPod Touch platform was released , titled Watchmen : Justice is Coming . Though highly anticipated , this mobile title suffered from serious game play and network issues which have yet to be resolved .

As a promotion for the film , Warner Bros. Entertainment released Watchmen : Motion Comic , a

series of narrated animations of the original comic book . The first chapter was released for purchase in the summer of 2008 on digital video stores , such as iTunes Store and Amazon Video on Demand . DC Direct released action figures based on the film in January 2009 . Director Zack Snyder also set up a YouTube contest petitioning Watchmen fans to create faux commercials of products made by the fictional Veidt Enterprises . The producers also released two short video pieces online , which were intended to be viral videos designed as fictional backstory pieces , with one being a 1970 newscast marking the 10th anniversary of the public appearance of Dr. Manhattan . The other was a short propaganda film promoting the Keene Act of 1977 , which made it illegal to be a superhero without government support . An official viral marketing web site , The New Frontiersman , is named after the tabloid magazine featured in the graphic novel , and contains teasers styled as declassified documents . After the trailer to the film premiered in July 2008 , DC Comics president Paul Levitz said that the company had had to print more than 900 @, @ 000 copies of Watchmen trade collection to meet the additional demand for the book that the advertising campaign had generated , with the total annual print run expected to be over one million copies . DC Comics reissued Watchmen # 1 for the original cover price of \$ 1 @. @ 50 on December 10 , 2008 ; no other issues are to be reprinted .

= = = Home media = = =

Tales of the Black Freighter , a fictional comic within the Watchmen limited series , was adapted as a direct @-@ to @-@ video animated feature from Warner Premiere and Warner Bros. Animation , and released on March 24 , 2009 . It was originally included in the Watchmen script , but was changed from live @-@ action footage to animation because of the \$ 20 million it would have cost to film it in the stylized manner of 300 that Snyder wanted ; this animated version , originally intended to be included in the final cut , was then cut because the film was already approaching a three @-@ hour running time . Gerard Butler , who starred in 300 , voices the Captain in the animated feature , having been promised a role in the live @-@ action film that never materialized . Jared Harris voices his deceased friend Ridley , whom the Captain hallucinates is talking to him . Snyder had Butler and Harris record their parts together . International rights to Black Freighter are held by Paramount .

The Tales of the Black Freighter DVD also includes Under the Hood , a fictional in @-@ universe documentary detailing the characters ' backstories , which takes its title from that of Hollis Mason 's memoirs in the comic book . Under the Hood is rated PG because it is meant to resemble a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes television news magazine profile of the characters . The actors were allowed to improvise during filming interviews in character . Bolex cameras were even used to film " archive " footage of the Minutemen . The film itself was scheduled to be released on DVD four months after Tales of the Black Freighter , and Warner released a director 's cut on July 21 , 2009 , and the extended version with the animated film edited back into the main picture was scheduled to be released on November 3 , 2009 , but did not hit the shelves until November 10 , 2009 . Snyder said if the film did well enough , a theatrical release of the director 's cut would be shown at theaters in New York and Los Angeles simultaneously . In addition , the Watchmen : Motion Comic , was released in digital video stores and DVD on March 3 . It included an exclusive scene from the movie but as of press time ( prior to the disc 's release ) the scene had yet to be added .

The film was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray on July 21 , 2009 . The Blu @-@ ray version contains " Maximum Movie Mode " , which plays the film along with a video presentation by director Snyder , and includes behind @-@ the @-@ scenes footage , comic comparisons , trivia , and more . In November 2009 , an " Ultimate Collector 's Edition " was released . The five @-@ disc set includes the director 's cut of the film with Tales of the Black Freighter woven in , new commentaries by Zack Snyder and Dave Gibbons , the complete Watchmen : Motion Comic , and over 3 hours of bonus content including Under the Hood , which was previously released on the Tales of the Black Freighter DVD . A special Blu @-@ ray included the director 's cut of Watchmen along with both parts of the game Watchmen : The End is Nigh for PlayStation 3 .

Watchmen debuted at the top of the rental , DVD , and Blu @-@ ray charts . First week sales of the DVD stood at 1 @, @ 232 @, @ 725 copies , generating \$ 24 @, @ 597 @, @ 425 in sales revenue .

As of November 1 , 2009 the DVD has sold a total of 2 @, @ 510 @, @ 321 copies and \$ 46 @, @ 766 @, @ 383 in revenue .

= = = Director 's cut = = =

A director 's cut of the film running at 186 minutes held a limited release in Los Angeles , Dallas , Minneapolis , and New York City . The director 's cut was released on DVD in the United States , along with the theatrical version . The director 's cut was also released on Blu @-@ ray , but not the theatrical cut . The theatrical version was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray in the European area , later on , the director 's cut was also released , exclusively on the Blu @-@ ray format . This is the preferred version of the film by director Zack Snyder .

= = = Ultimate cut = = =

In November 2009 , a four @-@ disc set was released as the " Ultimate Cut " . This version included the director 's cut of the film re @-@ edited to contain Tales of the Black Freighter into the story as it is featured in the graphic novel , bringing the run time of the film to 215 minutes . The set also included two additional hours of bonus features including Under the Hood and The Complete Motion Comic . Originally released only on DVD , the set later became available on Blu @-@ ray .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

Watchmen was released at midnight on March 5 , 2009 , and earned an estimated \$ 4 @. @ 6 million for the early showing , which is approximately twice as much as 300 , Snyder 's previous comic book adaptation . The film earned \$ 24 @, @ 515 @, @ 772 in 3 @, @ 611 theaters its first day , and later finished its opening weekend grossing \$ 55 @, @ 214 @, @ 334 . Watchmen 's opening weekend is the highest of any Alan Moore adaptation to date , and the income was also greater than the entire box office take of From Hell , which ended its theatrical run with \$ 31 @, @ 602 @, @ 566 . Although the film finished with \$ 55 million for its opening , while Snyder 's previous adaptation 300 earned \$ 70 million in its opening weekend , Warner Bros. ' head of distribution , Dan Fellman , believes that the opening weekend success of the two films cannot be compared due to the extended running time of Watchmen ? the film comes in at 2 hours and 45 minutes , while 300 is just under 2 hours ? provides the 2009 film with fewer showings a night than 300 . Next to the general theaters , Watchmen pulled in \$ 5 @. @ 4 million at 124 IMAX screens , which is the fifth largest opening behind Transformers : Revenge of the Fallen , Star Trek , Avatar , and The Dark Knight .

Following its first week at the box office , Watchmen saw a significant drop in attendance . By the end of its second weekend , the film brought in \$ 17 @, @ 817 @, @ 301 , finishing second on that weekend 's box office . The 67 @. @ 7 % overall decrease is one of the highest for a major comic book film . Losing two @-@ thirds of its audience from its opening weekend , the film finished second for the weekend of March 13 ? 15 , 2009 . The film continued to drop about 60 % in almost every subsequent weekend , leaving the top ten in its fifth weekend , and the top twenty in its seventh . Watchmen crossed the \$ 100 million mark on March 26 , its twenty @-@ first day at the box office , and finished its theatrical run in the United States on May 28 , having grossed \$ 107 @, @ 509 @, @ 799 in 84 days . The film had grossed one @-@ fifth of its ultimate gross on its opening day , and more than half of that total by the end of its opening weekend .

Watchmen currently sits tenth in all time March openings , as well as the twelfth largest opening for an R @-@ rated film in North American history . It was the sixth highest grossing R @-@ rated film of 2009 , behind The Hangover , Inglourious Basterds , District 9 , Paranormal Activity , and It 's Complicated . On the North American box office , Watchmen currently sits as the twelfth highest

grossing film based on a DC Comics comic book ( narrowly ahead of 1997 's Batman & Robin ) , and the thirty @-@ first highest @-@ grossing film of 2009 .

Watchmen earned \$ 26 @.@ 6 million in 45 territories overseas ; of these , Britain and France had the highest box office with an estimated \$ 4 @.@ 6 million and \$ 2 @.@ 5 million , respectively . Watchmen also took in approximately \$ 2 @.@ 3 million in Russia , \$ 2 @.@ 3 million in Australia , \$ 1 @.@ 6 million in Italy , and \$ 1 @.@ 4 million in Korea . The film collected \$ 77 @,@ 743 @,@ 688 in foreign box office , bringing its worldwide total to \$ 185 @,@ 253 @,@ 487 .

= = = Critical reaction = = =

Watchmen received a polarizing reaction from both audiences and critics . Some critics gave it overwhelmingly positive reviews for the dark and unique take on the superhero genre , the cast , and the visual effects ; while others derided it for the same reasons , as well as the R @-@ rating ( for " strong graphic violence , sexuality , nudity , and language " ) , the running time , and the much @-@ publicized fidelity to the graphic novel .

On Rotten Tomatoes , Watchmen currently has a 65 % ' fresh ' approval rating , based on 294 reviews , with an average rating of 6 @.@ 3 / 10 . The site 's critical consensus reads , " Gritty and visually striking , Watchmen is a faithful adaptation of Alan Moore 's graphic novel , but its complex narrative structure may make it difficult for it to appeal to viewers not already familiar with the source material . " By comparison , on Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating reviews from mainstream critics , the film has a score of 56 out of 100 , based on 39 critics , indicating " mixed or average reviews " . CinemaScore polls reported that the average grade cinemagoers gave the film was B on an A + to F scale , and that the primary audience was older men .

Patrick Kolan of IGN Australia gave the film an enormous amount of praise , awarding it a perfect 10 / 10 and saying " It 's the Watchmen film you always wanted to see , but never expected to get . " Also praising the film along with another perfect score ( 4 / 4 ) was Kyle Smith of the New York Post , comparing it to some of Stanley Kubrick 's films . " Director Zack Snyder 's cerebral , scintillating follow @-@ up to 300 seems , to even a weary filmgoer 's eye , as fresh and magnificent in sound and vision as 2001 . " Roger Ebert gave it four out of four stars . " It 's a compelling visceral film ? sound , images and characters combined into a decidedly odd visual experience that evokes the feel of a graphic novel . " Richard Corliss of Time concluded " this ambitious picture is a thing of bits and pieces , " yet " the bits are glorious , the pieces magnificent . " Total Film awarded it 4 / 5 stars , stating : " It 's hard to imagine anyone watching the Watchmen as faithfully as Zack Snyder 's heartfelt , stylised adap . Uncompromising , uncommercial , and unique . " When comparing the film to the original source material , Ian Nathan of Empire felt that while " it isn 't the graphic novel ... Zack Snyder clearly gives a toss , creating a smart , stylish , decent adaptation . " Nick Dent of Time Out Sydney gave the film 4 / 6 in his review of February 25 , praising the film 's inventiveness but concluding , " While Watchmen is still as rich , daring , and intelligent an action film as there 's ever been , it also proves Moore absolutely right [ that Watchmen is inherently un @-@ filmable ] . As a comic book , Watchmen is an extraordinary thing . As a movie , it 's just another movie , awash with sound and fury . "

The negative reviews generally disliked the film 's Cold War @-@ period setting , using various adjectives to describe it such as " stuffy " , " stiff " , " bor [ ing ] " , " oddly hollow " , " embalmed " , " truncated " , and " psychic suffocation " . They cited the film 's much @-@ advertised reverence of the source material as a fault , referring to the story as " trapped " in a faithful representation of Alan Moore 's graphic novel . " Watchmen is a bore [ ... ] It sinks under the weight of its reverence for the original , " wrote Philip Kennicott of The Washington Post . Devin Gordon wrote for Newsweek , " That 's the trouble with loyalty . Too little , and you alienate your core fans . Too much , and you lose everyone ? and everything ? else . " Owen Gleiberman 's Entertainment Weekly review reads , " Snyder treats each image with the same stuffy hermetic reverence . He doesn 't move the camera or let the scenes breathe . He crams the film with bits and pieces , trapping his actors like bugs wriggling in the frame . " " [ Snyder ] never pause [ s ] to develop a vision of his own . The result is oddly hollow and disjointed ; the actors moving stiffly from one overdetermined tableau to another , "



said Noah Berlatsky of the Chicago Reader . David Edelstein of New York agrees : " They 've made the most reverent adaptation of a graphic novel ever . But this kind of reverence kills what it seeks to preserve . The movie is embalmed . " A reviewer in The Wall Street Journal wrote , " Watching ' Watchmen ' is the spiritual equivalent of being whacked on the skull for 163 minutes . The reverence is inert , the violence noxious , the mythology murky , the tone grandiose , the texture glutinous . " Donald Clarke of The Irish Times was similarly dismissive : " Snyder , director of the unsubtle 300 , has squinted hard at the source material and turned it into a colossal animated storyboard , augmented by indifferent performances and moronically obvious music cues . " The trade magazines Variety and The Hollywood Reporter were even less taken with the film . Variety 's Justin Chang commented that , " The movie is ultimately undone by its own reverence ; there 's simply no room for these characters and stories to breathe of their own accord , and even the most fastidiously replicated scenes can feel glib and truncated , " and Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter writing , " The real disappointment is that the film does not transport an audience to another world , as 300 did . Nor does the third @-@ rate Chandler @-@ esque narration by Rorschach help ... Looks like we have the first real flop of 2009 . "

Analyzing the divided response , Geoff Boucher of the Los Angeles Times felt that , like Eyes Wide Shut , The Passion of the Christ , or Fight Club , Watchmen would continue to be a talking point among those who liked or disliked the film . Boucher felt in spite of his own mixed feelings about the finished film , he was " oddly proud " that the director had made a faithful adaptation that was " nothing less than the boldest popcorn movie ever made . Snyder somehow managed to get a major studio to make a movie with no stars , no ' name ' superheroes and a hard R @-@ rating , thanks to all those broken bones , that oddly off @-@ putting Owl Ship sex scene and , of course , the unforgettable glowing blue penis . "

= = = Awards = = =

Watchmen was nominated for one award at the 2009 VES Awards , seven awards at the 36th Saturn Awards , and 13 awards at the 2009 Scream Awards . The film was also pre @-@ nominated for the Academy Award for Best Visual Effects , although it did not make the final shortlist .

= = TV series = =

On October 1 , 2015 , it was reported that HBO is in talks with Snyder to make a TV series based on the comics with no word about it being a sequel to the film .