

The Odyssey (2026 film)

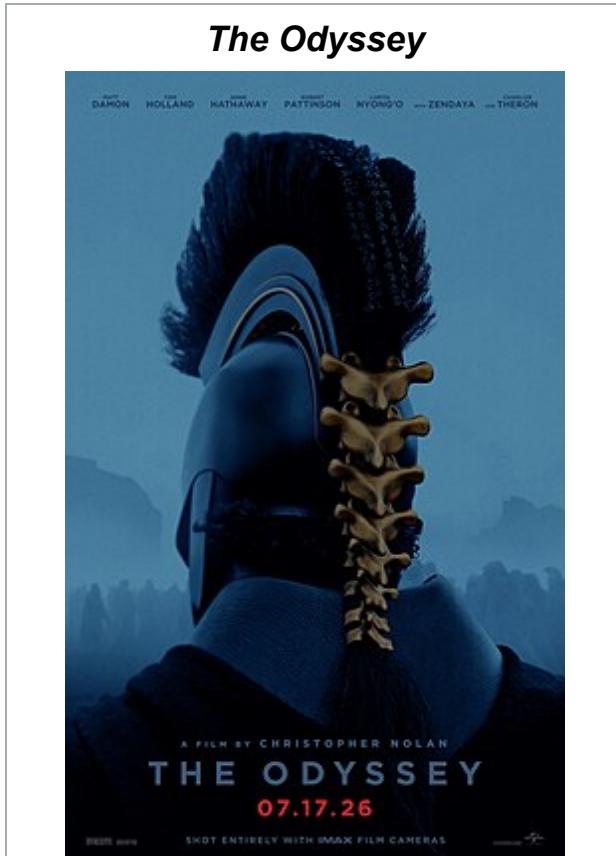
The Odyssey is an upcoming epic fantasy action film written and directed by Christopher Nolan. An adaptation of Homer's ancient Greek epic the *Odyssey*, the film stars Matt Damon as Odysseus, the Greek king of Ithaca, and chronicles his long and perilous journey home after the Trojan War as he attempts to reunite with his wife, Penelope, portrayed by Anne Hathaway. The ensemble cast also features Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson, Lupita Nyong'o, Zendaya, and Charlize Theron, among others. Nolan and his wife Emma Thomas produce the film through their production company, Syncopy.

Nolan began writing *The Odyssey* in March 2024, secured the project with Universal Pictures by October, and the film was announced in December. Casting occurred throughout late 2024, and Damon was confirmed for the lead role in February 2025. Filming took place from February to August 2025 across multiple international locations throughout Morocco, Greece, Italy, Scotland, Iceland, and Western Sahara. With an estimated budget of \$250 million, the film is the most expensive of Nolan's career and his first to be shot entirely on IMAX's 70 mm film cameras.

The Odyssey is scheduled to be theatrically released in the United States by Universal Pictures on July 17, 2026.

Synopsis

The Odyssey follows Odysseus, the legendary Greek king of Ithaca, on his long and perilous journey home following the Trojan War, chronicling his encounters with mythical beings such as the Cyclops Polyphemus, sirens, and the witch-goddess Circe, while attempting to reunite with his wife, Penelope.^[3]



Teaser poster

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Directed by | Christopher Nolan |
| Screenplay by | Christopher Nolan |
| Based on | Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> |
| Produced by | Emma Thomas |
| | Christopher Nolan |
| Starring | Matt Damon |
| | Tom Holland |
| | Anne Hathaway |
| | Robert Pattinson |
| | Lupita Nyong'o |
| | Zendaya |
| | Charlize Theron |
| Cinematography | Hoyte van Hoytema |
| Edited by | Jennifer Lame |
| Music by | Ludwig Göransson |

Cast

- Matt Damon as Odysseus:

The legendary Greek king of Ithaca.^[4] Director Christopher Nolan described Odysseus as complicated, "an amazing strategist, [and] a very wily person", and was interested in his cleverness and inventiveness, particularly citing Odysseus's characterization in the 2017 translation of the *Odyssey* by British-American classicist Emily

Wilson.^[5] To prepare for the role, Damon underwent

an extensive training regimen and a strict diet to become "lean but strong", which included no longer consuming gluten and reducing his weight to 167 pounds (76 kilograms).^[6] He also grew a full beard for a year, after Nolan declined to use artificial facial hair because he wanted to capture "the physicality of real hair".^{[7][6]}

- Tom Holland as Telemachus, Odysseus's son who is determined to find his father^{[8][9]:55}

- Anne Hathaway as Penelope, Odysseus's wife who is fending off potential suitors in his absence^[10]

- Robert Pattinson as Antinous, one of Penelope's suitors^[10]

- Lupita Nyong'o^[11]

- Zendaya as Athena, the goddess of wisdom, war, and handicraft who is protecting Odysseus on his journey^{[9]:50}

- Charlize Theron as Circe, a goddess and witch^[12]

- Jon Bernthal as Menelaus, the Greek king of Sparta and Agamemnon's brother^{[9]:50}

- Benny Safdie as Agamemnon, Menelaus's brother and the commander of the Achaeans during the Trojan War^[13]

- John Leguizamo as Eumeus, Odysseus's faithful servant^{[9]:55}

- Himesh Patel as Eurylochus, Odysseus's second-in-command^[10]

- Will Yun Lee as one of Odysseus's shipmates^{[9]:59}

- Mia Goth as Melantho, a maid of Odysseus and Penelope^[5]

- Jimmy Gonzales as Cepheus, one of Odysseus's shipmates^[10]

Additional cast members with undisclosed supporting roles are Elliot Page, Bill Irwin, Samantha Morton,^[14] Jesse Garcia,^[15] Rafi Gavron, Shiloh Fernandez,^[16] Corey Hawkins,^[17] Nick E. Tarabay, Maurice Compte,^[18] Michael Vlamis, Iddo Goldberg,^[19] Josh Stewart,^[20] Ryan Hurst,^[21] Anthony Molinari,^[22] Jovan Adepo,^[23] Logan Marshall-Green,^[24] James Remar,^[25] and Travis Scott.^[26]

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Production companies | Universal Pictures ^[1] Syncopy ^[1] |
| Distributed by | Universal Pictures |
| Release date | July 17, 2026 |
| Countries | United Kingdom United States |
| Language | English |
| Budget | \$250 million ^[2] |

Production

Development and casting

By November 2023, director Christopher Nolan had yet to decide what his next film would be after *Oppenheimer* (2023). While he was receptive to various ideas for his follow-up, the director felt he would have to "own it completely".^[27] After winning the Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Director for *Oppenheimer* in March 2024, Nolan began writing the script for his next film.^{[28][29]} In May 2024, Nolan's wife and producing partner, Emma Thomas, said that following *Oppenheimer*'s success, the duo felt they had an opportunity to explore unlimited possibilities but had yet to deliberate practicalities.^[27] Nolan was revealed in October to be developing his next film at Universal Pictures, after working with that studio on *Oppenheimer*. Nolan was confirmed to be writing the script and producing the film once again with Thomas through their production company, Syncopy. Matt Damon was in talks to star in the film, after collaborating with Nolan on *Oppenheimer* and *Interstellar* (2014), and filming was slated to begin in early 2025. Unlike *Oppenheimer*, which Universal acquired at auction, this film was set up directly at the studio and given a release date of July 17, 2026.^{[30][31]}



Writer and director Christopher Nolan reunited with Universal Pictures to develop *The Odyssey* as his follow-up to *Oppenheimer*

The film's logline and additional details of its premise were kept largely secretive compared to Nolan's previous films, which prompted much speculation about its subject matter.^{[32][33]} This included rumors that it would either be a vampire period piece, a reboot of the 1983 helicopter action-thriller film *Blue Thunder*,^{[34][32][33]} or an adaptation of the British spy television series *The Prisoner* (1967–68), which Nolan was previously attached to in 2009,^{[28][30]} but all of these were debunked.^{[32][33][30]} Nolan later reflected that the "disadvantage of never telling people what we're doing" was the invention and circulation of rumors, but he also enjoyed them.^[34] Damon was confirmed to star later in October when Tom Holland was cast.^[35] Previous Nolan collaborators Anne Hathaway—who starred in *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) and *Interstellar*—and Robert Pattinson, who starred in *Tenet* (2020), joined the cast in November,^{[36][32]} alongside Zendaya,^[36] Lupita Nyong'o,^[11] and Charlize Theron.^[33] Damon, Holland, Hathaway, and Pattinson were all set for lead roles in the film, with Nyong'o and Zendaya having supporting roles.^[32]

In December 2024, Universal announced Nolan's new film as *The Odyssey*, an adaptation of Homer's ancient Greek epic poem the *Odyssey*. The studio described the film as a "mythic action epic" that would be filmed worldwide.^{[3][37]} Nolan was previously attached to direct the film *Troy* (2004)—based on Homer's *Odyssey* predecessor the *Iliad*—that Wolfgang Petersen had developed for Warner Bros. Pictures, before Petersen chose to direct *Troy* instead of a planned *Batman vs. Superman* film, and Nolan subsequently made *Batman Begins* (2005).^{[38][39][40]} *The Odyssey* was expected to have a \$250 million budget, which would make it the most expensive film of Nolan's career.^{[41][2]} Nolan and Thomas described *The Odyssey* as "foundational" because it incorporates aspects of the horror,

mystery, romance, and thriller genres of stories.^{[9]:59[42]} Nolan sought to elevate his work and experience with *The Odyssey* and drew inspiration from various Greek mythology-inspired films he watched growing up, particularly the works of animator and special effects artist Ray Harryhausen.^[42] Production designer Ruth De Jong and costume designer Ellen Mirojnick returned to work with Nolan from *Oppenheimer*.^{[43][44]} To combine the *Odyssey*'s fantastical elements with Nolan's use of "tactile realism", the director chose to take a realistic approach in depicting the evidence and actions of the gods through natural phenomena that were once considered "supernatural" during the story's time period. Nolan called this a "big breakthrough creatively".^{[9]:59}

"I remember seeing a school play of [the *Odyssey*] when I was five or six years old. The older kids were doing it. I remember the Sirens and him being strapped to the mast and things like that. I think it's in all of us, really. And when you start to break down the text and adapt it, you find that all of these other films – and all the films I've worked on – you know, they're all from the *Odyssey*. Emma [Thomas] said it best when we first announced the project: it's foundational."

— Christopher Nolan on his early interest in the *Odyssey* and how it influenced his previous films^{[9]:50}

Further casting took place throughout early 2025, with prior Nolan collaborators Benny Safdie,^[45] Elliot Page, Himesh Patel, Bill Irwin,^[14] Josh Stewart,^[20] Anthony Molinari,^[22] and James Remar joining.^[25] Additional actors cast alongside them were Jon Bernthal,^[46] John Leguizamo,^[47] Samantha Morton,^[14] Jesse Garcia, Will Yun Lee,^[15] Rafi Gavron, Shiloh Fernandez,^[16] Mia Goth,^[48] Corey Hawkins,^[17] Nick E. Tarabay, Jimmy Gonzales, Maurice Compte,^[18] Michael Vlamis, Iddo Goldberg,^[19] Ryan Hurst,^[21] and Jovan Adepo.^[23] Cosmo Jarvis had also been cast,^[49] but dropped out shortly before filming began due to a scheduling conflict and was subsequently replaced by Logan Marshall-Green.^[24] Skeet Ulrich said he unsuccessfully read for a role in the film in early February alongside two other actors.^[50] Universal confirmed that Damon was portraying Odysseus in the middle of February, ahead of the start of filming later that month. This came after some rumors had circulated that Holland could be playing the role;^[4] Holland was later confirmed to be portraying Odysseus's son, Telemachus.^[8]

Filming

Principal photography lasted for 91 days between February 25 and August 8, 2025,^{[42][51][52]} and wrapped nine days ahead of schedule.^{[9]:56} Location shooting took place across five countries: Morocco, Greece, Italy, Iceland, and Scotland.^[53] Hoyte van Hoytema reunited with Nolan as cinematographer.^[4] After using IMAX 70 mm film extensively since *The Dark Knight* (2008), *The Odyssey* is Nolan's first film to be shot entirely with IMAX film cameras, using a newly developed lighter and quieter version along with existing technology.^{[37][54][55]} Over 2 million feet (610 kilometres) of IMAX 70 mm film was used to shoot *The Odyssey*.^[42] The production used the working title *Charlie's Tale*.^[56] Nolan sought to embrace the "physicality of the real world" by filming on location to help inform the storytelling and capture "how hard those journeys would have been for people. And the leap of faith that was being made in an unmapped, uncharted world." The director felt the shifting weather conditions amplified this practical approach because of the challenges it posed.^[42]

The first scenes were filmed in late February at the Aït Benhaddou village in the city of Ouarzazate, Morocco,^{[51][9]:56–57} to depict the city of Troy at the end of the Trojan War in a "hors d'œuvre" sequence before the bulk of The Odyssey,^{[9]:56–57[57]} as well as in the cities of Essaouira and Marrakesh.^{[58][59]} Filming took place in the Messenia unit of the Peloponnese region in Greece, from March 10 to 21, at Pylos, the Methoni Castle, the Almyrolakkos beach in Yialova, and Nestor's Cave in the Voidokilia beach for scenes featuring the Cyclops Polyphemus, as well as at an archaeological palace site in Acrocorinth, Corinth.^{[60][61][62][63]} The production partnered with Faliro House Productions's NAF subsidiary for filming in Greece,^[62] which lasted for a total of three weeks and included a retroactive 40% cash rebate for the production.^[64]

By March 27, the production moved to the Aegadian Islands in Sicily, Italy, to film on the island of Favignana, believed to be the location known as the "goat island" in the poem.^{[65][43]} Water-borne filming subsequently took place from April 15 to May 15 throughout the Aeolian Islands for scenes featuring the mythological island of Aeolia, occurring along the islands of Lipari, Basiluzzo, and Vulcano. Filming in these regions was subject to certain safeguarding restrictions from local ordinances.^{[66][65]} For the maritime sequences, the production used the largest modern Viking longship, the Draken Harald Hårfagre, which doubled as an ancient Greek warship that the actors portraying Odysseus's crew commanded.^{[9]:55[42][67]} Nolan described filming at sea as a particularly primal experience.^[42] Halfway through shooting by early May, filming occurred in Los Angeles on the film's only set constructed on a studio sound stage,^{[9]:55[68]} before shooting at Findlater Castle in Moray, Scotland, in early June.^[69] For ten days between the middle and end of June, the production partnered with Truenorth and relocated to remote regions of Iceland, including the harbour Landeyjahöfn, the Hjörleifshöfði mountain, the river Markarfljót, and the Snæfellsnes peninsula,^{[23][56]} primarily to shoot scenes on their black sand beaches for the Greek underworld of Hades,^{[9]:55[53]} before returning to Scotland for scenes at the Buckie Harbour fishing port along the Moray Firth coast and at the secluded Sunnyside Beach near Cullen, Moray.^{[70][67]} Filming took place in the Culbin Forest from July 3 to 16, before returning to Findlater Castle through July 25,^[70] with Theron filming her scenes as Circe during the last two weeks in July.^[12]

Filming took place for four days between July 17 and 22, with Damon and Zendaya, at the White Dune near Dakhla, Western Sahara,^{[71][57][72][73]} a city under Moroccan occupation since 1975.^{[74][73][59]} The UN-recognized Polisario Front and organizers of the Sahara International Film Festival decried the decision to film in Western Sahara as whitewashing Morocco's colonialism.^{[58][72]} The festival's organizers called for the production to be halted, but filming in the territory had already concluded at that time.^{[73][72]} They subsequently released a statement calling on Nolan to obtain consent from "the legal representatives of the Sahrawi people" or otherwise remove the scenes shot in Dakhla. This statement was signed by several prominent figures, including Spanish actors Carlos and Javier Bardem, Luis Tosar, Carolina Yuste, and Juan Diego Botto, Spanish filmmakers Rodrigo Sorogoyen and Icíar Bollaín, and Sahrawi human rights defender Elghalia Djimi.^{[75][76][77]} Meanwhile, the Moroccan Cinematographic Center called The Odyssey an important production to Morocco's



Some scenes were filmed at the White Dune near the Moroccan-occupied city of Dakhla, Western Sahara, which garnered some criticism.

promotion of its film industry and said that it was the first major American film to be filmed in that territory.^{[58][59]} Filming also took place in Malta before concluding back in Los Angeles.^[52] Some filming was also expected to occur in the United Kingdom and Ireland.^{[65][22]}

Post-production

DNEG and Wētā Workshop are providing the film's visual effects.^{[1][78]} Some of Nolan's previous collaborators returning for *The Odyssey* are visual effects supervisor Andrew Jackson,^[1] editor Jennifer Lame,^[79] and composer Ludwig Göransson.^[80]

Marketing



A promotional image of star Matt Damon in costume as Odysseus was noted for the historical inaccuracies in its design.^[81]

Universal Pictures released a "surprise" first-look still image of Damon in costume as Odysseus in the middle of February 2025.^[4] Writing for People, Jen Juneau labeled Damon's side-profile pose "brooding" and "intimidating",^[82] while Christopher Marc of *The Playlist* praised the image as "tantalizing". He expected that Nolan would use more digital effects than in his previous films due to the *Odyssey*'s fantastical aspects.^[83] Various commentators and historians described the costume Damon wore—particularly its Corinthian helmet with a red plume—as historically inaccurate, both in terms of the armor Odysseus would have worn around the time the *Odyssey* takes place and of what is described in the *Iliad*.^[81] Film's Jeremy Mathai noted the "version of ancient Greek attire popularized by countless movies over the decades" and said that, while the image did not provide much insight into the tone or Nolan's approach to the story and source material, he was excited for it.^[84] Writing for Den of Geek, Joe George also acknowledged the costume's historical inaccuracies, but felt Nolan was paying homage to "classic Hollywood" films from his childhood, such as *The 300 Spartans* (1962) and *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), as well as the latter's stop-motion visual effects work by animator Ray Harryhausen. He stated that while Nolan's "decision to veer towards

old Hollywood instead of historical accuracy might surprise some", the director similarly incorporated aspects of films that influenced him in his previous works while still making them "feel original and of the moment".^[85]

A 70-second-long teaser trailer for *The Odyssey* featuring Holland's Telemachus and Bernthal's Menelaus debuted exclusively in movie theaters ahead of screenings for Universal's *Jurassic World Rebirth* upon its release in July 2025, one year before *The Odyssey*'s release;^{[8][86]} the teaser was leaked online soon after.^{[2][86]} Vanity Fair's Eléa Guilleminault-Bauer described the short teaser as previewing *The Odyssey* "through suggestion and cleverly elliptical editing",^[87] while Hannah Hunt at Collider highlighted the final scene of the teaser featuring Damon's Odysseus, unconscious and drifting in the ocean, and its thematic implications.^[88] Greg Evans at *The Independent* wrote that the leaked trailer sent some fans "into a frenzy" due to its high anticipation,^[89] which Ryan Britt of Men's Journal felt was warranted and described the teaser's "haunting nature" as promising "a myth

actually brought to life". He highlighted Bernthal's "ominous" narration with a "touch of naturalism and realism", noting that Odysseus is talked about more than he is depicted in the teaser.^[90] /Film's Rick Stevenson wrote that the teaser continued Nolan's tradition of using an "often cryptic, vibes-first trailer, meant more to tease the mood of the film than to give away much in the way of plot or detail", but also found it to be "fairly substantive" compared to the similar teasers for some of Nolan's previous films.^[91] Less enthusiastic reactions came from Erik Kain of *Forbes* and Esther Zuckerman at *The New York Times*, who both disliked the American accents of British actors for Greek characters. Kain was concerned about the "muted" aesthetic and "drained" color grading, but compared it more favorably to director Ridley Scott's film *Gladiator II* (2024), while Zuckerman felt the teaser was "coy about revealing too much of Nolan's take on Homer's saga".^{[92][93]}

An extended six-minute prologue debuted on December 12, 2025, in front of IMAX 70 mm screenings of re-releases for Warner Bros. Pictures's 2025 films *One Battle After Another* and *Sinners*, followed by *Avatar: Fire and Ash* upon its release on December 19.^[94] *Variety*'s Daniel D'Addario described the prologue, which depicts Odysseus and his men using the *Trojan Horse* at the end of the legendary *Trojan War*, as a "carefully wrought story" that "play[ed] like a grand-scale epic" within the wider film, comparing the prologue to the Trojan Horse itself. He felt Nolan had not "lost his touch with delicately intercutting between various developments — the chaos of the warfare against the precision of the gears gradually turning in the Trojan wall's door — or for granular character detail in the midst of the spectacle".^[95] Writing for *The Daily Telegraph*, Tim Robey stated that the "immediacy of this sequence as a race against time is very Nolan" and compared the "stifling claustrophobia" of being inside the Trojan Horse to sequences of capsized ships in Nolan's film *Dunkirk* (2017). He called the prologue "an out-of-the-blue experience for many" that "bodes very promisingly for a take on [the] Homeric epic that's gritty, gruelling, and aptly awe-inspiring", while praising Göransson's "nerve-racking crescendo" increasing throughout the scene. Conversely, Robey felt the footage did not "stack up against" the "total knockout" bank heist IMAX prologue for *The Dark Knight*.^[13] Tom Bacon at *ComicBook.com* commended Nolan's "phenomenal ability to portray a sense of scale" and the cinematography of the scenes, which he called "breathtaking". He declared that the "stunning" sequences would make *The Odyssey* "one of the most beautiful films of 2026".^[96] Journalist Jeff Sneider similarly praised the footage as "*incredible*", highlighting Göransson's intense score "ramping up" and van Hoytema "tak[ing] advantage of stunning shadows".^[97]

A shorter yet full-length teaser trailer debuted ahead of standard *Fire and Ash* showings,^[94] and was released online on December 22, 2025.^[98] Several commentators expressed enthusiasm for *The Odyssey* based on the two-minute trailer and highlighted the scope of Homer's epic being depicted.^{[99][100][101]} *IndieWire*'s Kate Erbland emphasized that the trailer "leans on the inherent drama and pain of the titular odyssey, including a few chilling deaths and a closer look at the leadership on display by our primary hero."^[99] Mireia Mullor and Nick Staniforth of *Total Film* noted that, while some footage from the prologue was used, the trailer was an extended preview of the film compared to previous promotional material.^[100] Soumya Srivastava wrote for the *Hindustan Times* that the trailer provided "tiny, mostly ambient sneak peeks into the story",^[102] while *Empire*'s Ben Travis was impressed by the "tantalising glimpse" and pointed out the trailer's focus on the "wet and wild photography" and the Trojan Horse rather than featuring the supporting cast members—Pattinson, Zendaya, Nyong'o, and Theron—who had been excluded from previous footage released.^[101] Edward Segarra at *USA Today* called the trailer montage "suspenseful" and dubbed Odysseus and Hathaway's Penelope "star-crossed lovers" like *Romeo and Juliet*,^[98] while Fran

Hoepfner of *Vulture* described their relationship as "one of the most Nolan-bait couples ever" by highlighting Odysseus's attempts to return home to his family.^[103] Conversely, Aimee Hart at *Polygon* expressed dissatisfaction with the trailer's low online compression, which she felt indicated why Nolan had it debut in theaters.^[104] Ryan Britt at *Inverse* acknowledged that some online commenters' reactions to the trailers being "boring" were justified, stating that the story's more fantastical adventure aspects were reserved for a theatrical experience.^[105] Some Greek publications noted further historical inaccuracies with the armor and ships depicted,^[53] which *Collider*'s Julio Bardini felt were not fair and said that Nolan was allowed some creative liberties with his adaptation.^[106] *Gizmodo*'s Germain Lussier said that a teaser poster released at that time, which featured a golden backbone on Odysseus's helmet, was a "striking contrast" to the first-look image. He pondered interpretations of the backbone related to Odysseus's strength and character, and felt it served as Nolan's response to criticisms of historical inaccuracies.^[107] Entertainment data analytics firm WaveMetrix reported that the trailer accumulated 121.4 million global views within 24 hours across *TikTok* (27%), *YouTube* (26%), *Facebook* (21%), *Instagram* (18%), and *X* (formerly Twitter) (10%), making it the eighth most-viewed trailer of 2025. This surpassed the trailer views for Universal's *Wicked: For Good* (113 million) and more than doubled the views for the first *Oppenheimer* trailer during the same time period.^[108]

Universal Pictures and *NBC Sports*, both owned by *NBCUniversal*, coordinated on an advertisement starring Damon to cross-promote the *2026 Winter Olympics* and *The Odyssey*. A short promotional clip debuted during the *January 2026 NFL Wild Card playoffs*, and will be followed by the full teaser airing during the *Winter Olympics* and a shorter version during the *Super Bowl LX* pregame show.^[109] New footage was included in a minute-long TV spot that aired on January 25, 2026, during the *AFC Championship Game* between the *New England Patriots* and the *Denver Broncos*. This featured a monologue scene with Holland, Bernthal, and rapper *Travis Scott*, who previously contributed the *Tenet* theme song "*The Plan*".^[26] *Vulture*'s Bethy Squires felt that Scott portraying a bard was fitting because poems such as the *Odyssey* were historically sung-and-rapped-through.^[110] Frazier Tharpe at *GQ* questioned whether Scott had a prominent role or a "glorified cameo", and called his appearance a "craftily placed" surprise for viewers, especially considering the high viewership of the game during a major North American winter storm.^[111]

Release

The Odyssey is scheduled to be theatrically released by *Universal Pictures* in the United States on July 17, 2026, in *IMAX*,^[37] *IMAX 70 mm* film formats,^[112] and premium large formats (PLFs).^[113] Tickets for select *IMAX 70 mm* screenings were made available on July 17, 2025, one year before the film's release, which was considered an unprecedented move by a major film distributor.^[112] Several of these showings sold out within the first 12 hours of their availability, including half of the 22 theaters available in the United States.^{[112][113]} *The Odyssey* was ranked as the most anticipated film of 2026 by *IMDb*.^[114] *Variety* predicted that *The Odyssey* would become the highest-grossing film of the year, in part based on the early ticket pre-sales,^[115] while *TheWrap* predicted that it could surpass *The Dark Knight* and *The Dark Knight Rises* to become Nolan's highest-grossing film.^[116]