

DISCUSSION ROUND 1

[Brad Pitt Turned Down Netflix's New David Fincher Thriller Because It Was Too Dark and Violent](#)

[Brad Pitt](#) thought Netflix's new actioner, *The Killer*, was so violent and mean-spirited that he turned down the lead role. Despite [David Fincher](#), Pitt's frequent collaborator, developing and directing the project, [the *Bullet Train* star](#) couldn't be convinced. Fincher recently revealed the info in an interview with [Rolling Stone](#).

The Killer stars Michael Fassbender as a nameless assassin on a job in Paris. After the hit goes wrong, and his loved ones are targeted by a shadowy enforcer (Tilda Swinton), the killer sets about executing his bloody revenge.

Fincher began developing the comedic thriller back in 2007 when he first became aware of the source graphic novel. At the time, he was finishing off *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, which marked the director's third collaboration with Pitt after *Se7en* and *Fight Club*. Fincher was hoping for a fourth team-up on *The Killer* with [the *Troy* stunner](#). But Pitt wasn't feeling it.

"I'd originally been thinking of Brad back in 2008," Fincher said. "But his response had been, 'Eh, a little too nihilistic for me.'"

The star's refusal left the casting in a state of flux. "OK, so, who?" the *Gone Girl* director recalled thinking of his other options. Pitt's reluctance, along with a busy schedule, caused Fincher to put *The Killer* on the back burner. "I'd been preoccupied, and then the rights lapsed and returned to the author," he said. "It just sort of went away at that point."

Fincher made four films before returning to *The Killer*, including *The Social Network* (2010) and *Mank* (2020), both of which earned him Academy Award nominations for best director. Though it features much more on-screen violence than Fincher's other work, *The Killer* is one of his more hopeful, and least nihilistic, movies. While the script seemingly changed a great deal in the intervening years, it's unclear if Pitt's notes had any impact on the tonal shift.

Fassbender, who starred opposite Pitt in *Inglourious Basterds*, inevitably took on the eponymous role. Fincher said the actor's precision as a race car driver aided the character, who speaks very little and expresses himself mostly through action.

"He likes a physical challenge, and because of his racing, he has this incredible precision," Fincher said of Fassbender. "I mean, it's practically a silent movie. And he was able to give the audience everything they needed to know simply by doing exactly what he did efficiently, precisely, and without a single word."

The Killer premiered in cinemas last month, earning mostly positive reviews. It's currently streaming on Netflix. You can check out the trailer below.

DISCUSSION ROUND 2

[‘The Marvels’ Opens to Just \\$6.6 Million at Thursday Box Office](#)

“[The Marvels](#)” began its domestic box office run with just \$6.6 million in Thursday preview grosses. That compares to the \$20.7 million which “Captain Marvel” earned via advance-night showings in early 2019, which led to a \$155 million opening weekend. A similar Thursday-to-weekend split (13.3%) would give the MCU action fantasy just \$49.6 million for the weekend. That would be well below the \$61 million that “Captain Marvel” earned on its first full day of theatrical release.

There is a grim irony that a major movie belonging to the MCU — a franchise that has often been credited (sometimes unfairly) with killing the movie star as a bankable variable — will open to comparatively miserable numbers partially because the trio of heroines — Brie Larson, Iman Vellani, Teyonah Parris — could not promote the film amid the SAG-AFTRA strike.

That’s not the entire reason for the downturn, but Marvel and the Walt Disney Company were certainly expecting the actress to aggressively sell the film and their characters to general audiences in the lead-up to release. Absent that, especially with two of the three characters having been introduced on Disney+ shows, the Nia DaCosta-directed “The Marvels” ended up seeming closer to a generic fantasy comedy that happened to take place in the MCU amid a time when merely existing within the MCU is less of an automatic hook.

That the reviews ended up merely being “okay” (61% fresh and 5.9/10 [on Rotten Tomatoes](#)) didn’t help. While the first “Captain Marvel” got a boost from being A) the first MCU movie fronted by a female superhero and B) a Marvel movie positioned between “Avengers: Infinity War” and “Avengers: Endgame,” “The Marvels” lacked either of these advantages.

Moreover, without the cast out there pushing the film, most of the pre-release chatter was about whether Marvel Studios overall was in a creative and commercial slump and/or whether audiences would need to have seen “WandaVision,” “Ms. Marvel” or “Secret Invasion” to understand the film. That the answer to the second question is “Nope,” “Can’t hurt but no” and “This movie doesn’t remotely reference the events of the summer of 2023 Disney+ series” didn’t stop the dreaded online discourse.

Regardless of the broader reasons for the downturn (Marvel fatigue, an inability to properly promote, not just calling it “Captain Marvel 2,” mixed reviews, etc.), the Walt Disney Company is probably looking at an opening weekend closer to \$45 million than \$55 million. That would be an opening weekend comedown on par with “Alice Through the Looking Glass” compared to “Alice in Wonderland.” That sequel earned \$299 million compared to its \$1.025 billion-grossing predecessor. A similar downturn from the \$1.128 billion total for “Captain Marvel” would give “The Marvels” a worldwide finish of \$329 million.


DISCUSSION ROUND 3

HOW CAN YOU TELL WHICH
ARE FOR REPUBLICANS AND WHICH
ARE FOR DEMOCRATS?



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DISCUSSION ROUND 4 (both pictures work in concert with each other)



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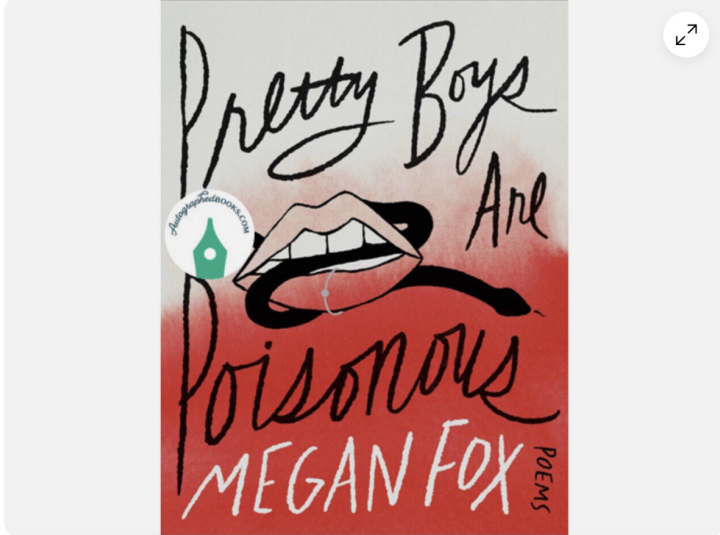
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