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Die Hard (1988) d. John McTiernan, 131 minutes Film Plot Summary New York detective/cop Lt. John McClane (Bruce Willis) took a flight to Los Angeles, arriving on Christmas Eve, 1988, with plans to join his estranged wife (of six months) Holly Gennero/McClane (Bonnie Bedelia) at a holiday party in her place of business, the 40 story high-rise Nakatomi Plaza Towers in Century City. A fast-talking, inquisitive limo driver named Argyle (De'voreaux White), paid for by the Nakatomi Corporation, drove him to the building, and promised to wait for him in the underground parking garage, pending the outcome of his renewed reconciliation with Holly. He entered the Christmas Eve party already in progress on the 30th floor, where he met the CEO Joe Takagi (James Shigeta), and was led to Holly's private office - her position was Director of Corporate Affairs. When McClane first saw Holly, Takagi commended her as a successful career woman: "She was made for the business. Tough as nails." McClane also met Holly's obnoxious, cocaine-using, egotistical co-worker Harry Ellis (Hart Bochner). While washing up in the bathroom, Holly invited him to use the spare bedroom at her house, where she lived with their two daughters, although they bickered about long-standing issues between them, including her use of her maiden name. After a large Pacific Courier truck pulled into the garage, two individuals exited a separate car and entered the building's downstairs lobby. The first was nasty, long blonde-haired henchman Karl Vreski (Alexander Godunov), who shot the front-desk officer and security guard. A second assailant named Theo (Clarence Gilyard, Jr.), a black technical-computer expert, disabled all the elevators (except one) and sealed off all the outer entrances and exits to the garage and the building. In the parking area, a Pacific Courier truck opened up with ten other heavily-armed, hi-tech terrorists, led by the classic bad-guy villain Hans Gruber (Alan Rickman), a well-read ex-member of the radical West German Volksfrei movement. As they infiltrated into the building, Karl - who was frustrated by his brother Tony Vreski's (Andreas Wisniewski) slow work, used a chain saw to slice through all the conduits holding the building's phone wiring to prevent any telephone communications. The gunmen took the sole elevator to the 30th floor and interrupted the party with gunfire. They took all the guests hostage, including McClane's wife. McClane, in a white T-shirt and barefooted, watched from the wash-room and then fled to a stairwell and various upper floors, keeping track of which ones were operational or under-construction. Gruber addressed the frightened party-goers, citing the corporation's greed and power worldwide (with a "legacy of greed"), and then took CEO Takagi away. In Takagi's executive offices and boardroom on the 34th floor (where McClane overheard their conversations), he was threatened to reveal the computer's passcodes, to access the $640 million dollars in negotiable bearer bonds locked in the Japanese corporation's vault. When Takagi refused, Gruber shot him point-blank in the head. The terrorists were forced to try to hack into the vault "the hard way." Theo told Gruber that it would take a half-hour to break the code, and two and a half hours to disable six other mechanical locks on the vault, leaving the seventh and final lock ("the electromagnetic seal") with circuits that could not be cut locally. Gruber replied confidently: "Trust me." To distract the terrorists and alert outside authorities, McClane activated a fire alarm on the 32nd floor, but the alarm was cancelled and the system deactivated. During a struggle with one of the German terrorists (Karl's brother Tony) sent to investigate, McClane broke his neck and then took his machine-gun, ammunition, radio and lighter from his satchel. He sent the dead body sitting in a chair down to the 30th floor on the elevator (with "Now I Have a Machine Gun - Ho-Ho-Ho" spelled out on his sweatshirt) to alert the terrorists to his presence (and his ability to thwart their efforts), as he stealthily entered the elevator shaft. On the building's roof, he used the two-way CB radio (on a reserved channel) to send out a "May-Day" alert about the terrorist take-over, and although he was not taken seriously, a black-and-white "drive-by" was ordered. While buying snacks at an AM-PM Mini-Mart (gas was 74.9 cents/gallon!), LAPD Sgt. Al Powell (Reginald VelJohnson) was notified of a Code 2 at the nearby Nakatomi Building in Century City, and proceeded to the area. When the terrorists overheard his alert, McClane escaped their gunfire and pursuit by moving through a maze of airducts and ventilation/elevator shafts from the rooftop back to the 35th floor and then to floor 31, in a tense cat-and-mouse sequence. He quipped:"Now I know what a TV dinner feels like." McClane killed two more terrorists, Heinrich (Gary Roberts) and Marco (Lorenzo Caccialanza), and took detonators from Heinrich's bag. To alert Officer Powell to problems inside (Powell had determined he was on a "wild goose chase"), McClane heaved the dead body of Marco out of the skyscraper onto his patrol car as he pulled away. Powell radioed in: "Police under automatic rifle fire at Nakatomi. I need back-up assistance now!" Sirens sounded from multiple police cars as the building was surrounded by LAPD, although Gruber called it only "inconvenient timing." When McClane radioed Gruber, he was called the "mysterious party crasher" and "Mr. Mystery Guest" - and misidentified as a security guard. For clarity's sake, McClane identified himself, to harrass and taunt him: "Just a fly in the ointment, Hans, the monkey in the wrench, the pain in the ass..." Gruber wasn't satisfied: "You know my name, but who are you? Just another American who saw too many movies as a child? Another orphan of a bankrupt culture who thinks he's John Wayne? Rambo? Marshal Dillon?" McClane responded: "I was always kinda partial to Roy Rogers actually. I really liked those sequined shirts." When Gruber replied: "Do you really think you have a chance against us, Mr. Cowboy?", McClane delivered his most familiar line: "Yippee-kai-yay, motherf--ker." On the radio with Powell throughout the remainder of the siege, McClane (calling himself "Roy") described the tense situation on the 30th floor with hostages, calling the terrorists "bad-ass perpetrators." SWAT teams, the FBI in helicopters, and a live-mobile news crew arrived at the scene to report on the incident of international terrorism. (Meanwhile, in the basement garage, limo driver Argyle finally learned of the situation - that the building was under siege, but found he was locked in and trapped). Cantankerous, stubborn and clueless Deputy Police Chief Dwayne T. Robinson (Paul Gleason) ordered an all-out assault of the building by his SWAT team, unaware of the ambush being prepared to greet them, as McClane worriedly called them "macho assholes." The terrorists set up a massive rocket launcher to repel the attack of an LAPD armored R.V. (Theo exclaimed as the vehicle exploded: "Oh my God, the quarterback is toast!"). To prevent further devastation, McClane opened the elevator doors and sent C4 plastic explosives down the shaft ("Geronimo, motherf--ker") - wiping out a few more terrorists (James and Alexander) on the second floor who were firing on the SWAT team. Calling himself Gruber's "white knight," Harry Ellis negotiated with the lead terrorist, telling him that he could pressure his good friend McClane and get him to cooperate and surrender: "I can give him to you" - Gruber learned McClane's name and occupation (NYPD officer). Ellis, by radio, attempted to convince McClane to "stop messing up the works," and asked him to reveal the location of the detonators so that no one else would get hurt. When Gruber realized that Ellis was lying and didn't really know McClane, Ellis was summarily shot dead. Gruber then spoke to police chief Robinson, falsely demanding the release of "revolutionary brothers and sisters" around the world in prison. If they complied within two hours, he promised that the hostages would be taken to the building's roof to accompany them in helicopters to the Los Angeles International Airport. When two FBI agents arrived (both named Johnson (Robert Davi and Grand L. Bush)), they took over responsibility from Robinson for the siege of the building. McClane confronted Gruber face-to-face, not realizing who he was when the terrorist gave him a real pseudonym, Bill Clay, and explained how he was one of the escaped hostages attempting to send a signal from the roof. After McClane had given him a gun to help, Gruber demanded that McClane drop the detonators in his satchel. The gun was not loaded, however, and McClane was enabled to escape (without his satchel) when Gruber's henchmen arrived and peppered him with machine-gun fire (spraying the area with shattered glass) - but he was able to kill two more bad guys (Franco and Fritz). McClane suffered bloodied feet after having to walk through shards of sharp glass from the blasted walls. The FBI ordered city engineers to cut the building's power (within grid 212, an area encompassing 10 square blocks), exactly what Gruber and Theo wanted, so that the seventh "electromagnetic seal" or lock could be released ("the circuits that cannot be cut are cut automatically in response to a terrorist incident. You asked for miracles. I give you the FBI"). The safe's vault opened, to the tune of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" movement from the 9th Symphony, revealing the bonds. The FBI then ordered fully armed helicopter support to approach the rooftop (rather than transports), while Gruber planned to blow the roof when they touched down (and then escape with the bonds in an emergency vehicle readied for him in the basement). McClane confessed to Powell that he wanted to convey to his wife that "she's the best thing that ever happened to a bum like me" and to apologize for not being supportive of her. Meanwhile, ambitious LA TV reporter Richard Thornburg (William Atherton) tracked down Holly's address and forced his way in to interview Holly and John's two children. McClane confirmed, from investigating the roof, that Gruber had set it to be detonated with C4 explosives - and radioed Powell to warn him of the double-cross: "The whole roof of the building is wired to..." but was seized by Karl before he finished his message. They viciously fought against each other, as the FBI helicopters (now armed with guns) approached, and Gruber learned from Thornburg's exclusive TV report (and a family portrait at Holly's desk) that McClane's wife was Holly Gennero. As he ordered the other hostages to the roof, Gruber kidnapped Holly as his own personal hostage. After their long struggle, McClane presumably killed Karl by strangling him with a heavy chain, and then charged up to the roof where he: (1) discovered that Holly was missing and had been taken prisoner on the 30th floor, and (2) ordered the hostages to flee downstairs to escape the wired-to-blow roof. However, he was misinterpreted as being one of the terrorists by the FBI agents in the helicopters and was shot at ("I'm on your side, you assholes!" he screamed). He then unraveled a long fire hose, tied himself to it, and jumped off the side of the building as he was assaulted a second time by helicopter fire. At the same time, Gruber detonated the roof and destroyed one of the FBI helicopters in the process. McClane precariously dangled over the face of the skyscraper, then shot out the large pane of glass in front of him, swung himself into another floor, and untied himself before being dragged and reeled out the window to his death. Meanwhile, limo driver Argyle foiled Theo's escape scheme in the basement by driving his limo and ramming it into the emergency ambulance getaway vehicle, driven by Theo (in a paramedic's disguise), that was preparing to take Gruber from the building - he then punched Theo unconscious. The bloodied and wearied McClane confronted Gruber (holding a gun on hostage Holly in front of him) and one other remaining terrorist, asking about the incredulous robbery that required the destruction of the entire building ("Why'd you have to nuke the entire building, Hans?") - Gruber replied that it was to make it look like everyone died. McClane was forced to drop his gun and admit "You got me," but got into a laughing fit with Gruber (and his thug assistant Eddie (Dennis Hayden)) to distract them. He suddenly reached behind his back and managed to shoot them (with a concealed loaded gun taped to his back, with his last two bullets) - he injured Gruber in the shoulder (he blew on his gun with the farewell: "Happy trails, Hans!") and killed the second remaining terrorist Eddie (Dennis Hayden) by a shot to the forehead. The bullet also broke the window behind Gruber. In the exciting and climactic confrontation, the injured Gruber stumbled backwards and crashed through a pane of glass while holding onto Holly's arm and metal Rolex watchband, nearly dragging her with him. McClane rushed forward and grabbed her, released or unclapsed the band, and watched as Gruber still threatening with a gun in his right hand, unforgettably fell backwards to his death 30 stories below, while Robinson watched and commented from the ground below: "Oh, I hope that's not a hostage." Bloodied and exhausted, McClane joyously kissed Holly. As they exited from the front of the building, McClane had his first face-to-face meeting with Powell, and introduced him to his wife (who noticeably identified herself as "Holly McClane"). As Robinson senselessly charged McClane with responsibility for Ellis' murder, property damage, and interfering with police business, terrorist Karl - thought to be dead - suddenly appeared screaming and aiming a machine gun at McClane. Powell drew his gun, the first time he had done so since accidentally killing a 13 year-old boy years earlier, and decisively shot him dead. Argyle drove his limo through the garage's exit gate to pick up the reunited couple, as TV reporter Thornburg attempted to interview McClane about his "incredible ordeal" - Holly punched him squarely in the face during the live broadcast for earlier revealing her identity (he asked his cameraman: "Did you get that?"). Argyle joked as he prepared to drive the couple away, as they kissed in the limo's backseat: "If this is their idea of Christmas, I've gotta be here for New Year's," to the tune of Bing Crosby's singing of: "Let It Snow." Film Notables (Awards, Facts, etc.) This highly-acclaimed, big-budget action film (and quintessential guy film) was the first in a series of films stretching over a period of 20 years, featuring Bruce Willis as wise-cracking, tough-guy NYC police cop John McClane with real human vulnerabilities, the protagonist in all four films. A fifth film was also added to the series: A Good Day to Die Hard (2013). 11 terrorists were killed (including the chief terrorist who fell off the building). Based on Roderick Thorp's 1979 novel Nothing Lasts Forever. Nominated for four Academy Awards (with no wins), including Best Sound Effects Editing, Best Film Editing, Best Sound and Best Visual Effects. From a production budget of approximately $28 million, the film's box-office was $83 million (domestic) and $140.7 million (worldwide). The film (and its many sequels) were known for McClane's oft-censored line of dialogue: "Yippee-kai-yay, motherf--ker." Lt. John McClane (Bruce Willis) Holly Gennero/McClane (Bonnie Bedelia) Limo Driver Argyle (De'voreaux White) CEO Joseph "Joe" Takagi (James Shigeta) Lead Terrorist Hans Gruber (Alan Rickman) Terrorist Karl Vreski (Alexander Godunov) Computer Expert/Terrorist Theo (Clarence Gilyard, Jr.) Holly's Egotistical Co-Worker Harry Ellis (Hart Bochner) LAPD Sgt. Al Powell (Reginald VelJohnson) Deputy Police Chief Dwayne T. Robinson (Paul Gleason) TV Reporter Richard Thornburg (William Atherton) John McClane, hero of the series. The Die Hard film series critically and commercially successful and popular action film series released by Hollywood. The series is composed of the five Die Hard films: Die Hard, Die Hard 2, Die Hard with a Vengeance, Live Free or Die Hard, and A Good Day to Die Hard. which all follow reluctant hero John McClane as he finds himself in the "wrong place at the wrong time" and must fight terrorists and save his loved ones. Combined, all five films have so far grossed over $1.2 billion dollars from the original released in 1988 to the fifth film's release in 2013. The series has also spawned six video games and a comic series Die Hard: Year One. Due to it's popularity and cult-like status, the Die Hard series has also become a magnet of pop culture parodies, references, and homages. Films[] Die Hard (1988)[] Main article: Die Hard In the franchise's first film, McClane takes on an internationally-based group of thugs who have seized control of Nakatomi Plaza in LA. The group have taken hostages and generally hold out on the 30th floor. Though it initially seems to be a straightforward terrorist attack, McClane eventually finds out that the terrorists are not terrorists at all, and the group is actually attempting to steal $640 million dollars worth of bearer bonds from the building's vault. The main antagonists in this movie are Hans Gruber, Karl, Theo and Eddie. Die Hard 2 (1990)[] Main article: Die Hard 2 In the second film, McClane battles a rogue former military unit who takes control of the landing systems and instruments of Dulles International Airport during a night time blizzard to rescue an imprisoned drug lord from custody. The main antagonists in this movie are Colonel William Stuart, General Ramon Esperanza and Major Grant. Die Hard with a Vengeance (1995)[] Main article: Die Hard with a Vengeance In the third film, the suspended McClane teams up with shopkeeper Zeus Carver to play a terrorist's sadistic game of "Simon Says" to stop a series of bombings in New York City. The main antagonists in this movie are Simon Gruber, Mathias Targo and Katya. Live Free or Die Hard (2007)[] Main article: Live Free or Die Hard In the fourth film, McClane and computer hacker Matt Farrell tries to stop a group of cyber-terrorists who are performing a deadly cyber-attack to shut down the entire infrastructure of the United States. The main antagonists in this movie are Thomas Gabriel, Mai Linh, Trey and Emerson. A Good Day to Die Hard (2013)[] Main article: A Good Day to Die Hard In the fifth film, McClane travels to Russia to help his estranged son John "Jack" McClane Jr. held in a Russian prison, and discovers that Jack is a CIA operative out to prevent Russian terrorists from getting their hands on weapons-grade uranium. The main antagonists in this movie are Yuri Komarov, Viktor Chagarin, Irina Komarov and Alik. Characters[] John McClane[] Main article: John McClane The reluctant hero and main protagonist in the series. McClane is a New York cop who finds himself taking on terrorists and saving his loved ones. Holly Gennero[] Main article: Holly Gennero McClane's now ex-wife whose relationship with John became more strained by each movie until Live Free or Die Hard, when it was confirmed that she and McClane had gotten a divorce sometime between the third and fourth films. Holly works for the Nakatomi Corporation, a career that John thought she would fail, but he was proven wrong. Holly was among the hostages during the Nakatomi Plaza takeover and was on one of the planes when mercenaries took over the Dulles International Airport. Lucy McClane[] Main article: Lucy McClane Lucy is the daughter of John McClane & Holly Gennero and the sister of John "Jack" McClane Jr. She was estranged from her father, but during her college years in Rutgers University she was kidnapped by cyber-terrorist Thomas Gabriel. After her father saves her and Matt Farrell, they seemed to be on speaking terms and she changed her last name from Gennero to McClane. Several years later, Lucy drove her father to the airport as he goes to Russia to investigate the arrest of her brother Jack. She was seen when John returns with Jack and she reunites with them after their adventure in Moscow and Chernobyl, Ukraine. John "Jack" McClane Jr.[] Main article: John McClane, Jr. John "Jack" Jr. is the son of John McClane & Holly Gennero and the brother of Lucy McClane. He will have a main role in A Good Day to Die Hard. When Jack was arrested for a killing in a nightclub in Moscow, McClane, who hasn't spoken to his son for several years, heads over there to find out what happened to him. It was later revealed that Jack is a CIA operative set on a deep-cover mission in Russia that has lasted for three years without his father's knowledge. Al Powell[] Main article: Al Powell Al is a Los Angeles Police sergeant who shared a friendship with John McClane after helping with the takeover of Nakatomi Building in Los Angeles. He also helped McClane briefly with the situation in Dulles International Airport. Richard Thornburg[] Main article: Richard Thornburg Thornburg is an arrogant, narcissistic reporter who exposed Holly's identity to Hans Gruber when he was interviewing Lucy and caused everyone in Dulles Airport to evacuate in mass panic after revealing the terrorist situation to the media, which interferes with police efforts. See also[] Die Hard film series on Wikipedia Jurassic World Rebirth Box Office: Scarlett Johansson's Dino Movie Inches Close To $600M Globally, Overtakes King Kong's Lifetime Haul7/20/2025by Arunava ChakrabartyKoiMoiThis 2010 Psychological Thriller Starring Samuel L Jackson & Michael Sheen Quietly Shook Viewers—Have You Seen It?7/20/2025by Vivek KumarKoiMoi7/20/2025by UnknownSneakPeekBruce Willis' Highest Rated Sci-Fi Movie by Most Hated Star Wars Director Nailed Time Travel Perfectly7/20/2025by Pratik HandoreFandomWireBrad Pitt Nearly Won An Oscar For These 3 Performances — Here's Where To Stream Them7/20/2025by Pranshu AwasthiKoiMoi'Guns Up' Review: Kevin James Leads a Limp Action Comedy About an Ex-Cop Mixed Up With the Mob7/18/2025by Siddhant AdlakhaVariety Film + TVSergei Loznitsa & Tricia Tuttle Among Jury Members For Sarajevo Film Festival7/18/2025by Diana LodderhoseDeadline Film + TVApple TV+ desvela el primer teaser tráiler de la cuarta temporada de 'The Morning Show'.7/17/2025by Marta MedinamundoCineAfter 5 Years in Development, Netflix's Live-Action Assassin's Creed Series Gets Exciting Update7/17/2025by Lee FreitagCBRIMDb.com, Inc. takes no responsibility for the content or accuracy of the above news articles, Tweets, or blog posts. This content is published for the entertainment of our users only. The news articles, Tweets, and blog posts do not represent IMDb's opinions nor can we guarantee that the reporting therein is completely factual. Please visit the source responsible for the item in question to report any concerns you may have regarding content or accuracy.You have no recently viewed pages Sort byList orderList orderAlphabeticalIMDb ratingPopularityNumber of ratingsRelease dateRuntimeDate addedYou have no recently viewed pages Few action film franchises have had the staying power of the Die Hard series, which has just found its latest streaming home. With five entries from 1988 to 2013, protagonist John McClane has seen a lot of action over the years, and the character has taken his place among the most iconic heroes in action cinema, standing alongside the likes of other great Johns such as Keanu Reeves' John Wick and Sylvester Stallone's John Rambo. While not every entry has been highly acclaimed or successful, each adds something different to the formula, both for better or worse. The Die Hard series launched the action career of star Bruce Willis, who had previously been known primarily for his comedic roles in the hit television series Moonlighting and the 1987 comedy film Blind Date, where Willis starred opposite Kim Basinger. The first Die Hard movie also launched the career of the late Alan Rickman, who would later go on to star in yet another huge franchise, the Harry Potter series, where he portrayed Professor Severus Snape. Die Hard has offered so much to the world of cinema overall, and continue reading if you'd like to know where you can stream each of John McClane's adventures. Die Hard - July 15, 1988 Die Hard 2 - July 4, 1990 Die Hard with a Vengeance - May 19, 1995 Live Free or Die Hard - June 27, 2007 A Good Day to Die Hard - February 14, 2013 The one that started it all, the original Die Hard, remains one of the best and most iconic action films of all time, and it is now streaming on Hulu, along with its four sequels. Upon our first meeting with Willis' John McClane, he's a struggling New York cop on the fringe of divorce from his wife, when he decides to accept her invite to an office Christmas party at Nakatomi Plaza in Los Angeles. All the while, a group of terrorists led by Alan Rickman's Hans Gruber hijack the tower and take McClane's wife Holly (Bonnie Bedelia) and her co-workers hostage. McClane, being the only one left in the building not accounted for, must become an unlikely hero and save the day in what is still an exhilarating rush from beginning to end. Die Hard was the highest-grossing action movie of 1988, and the film garnered four Academy Award nominations for Best Sound, Best Film Editing, Best Sound Effects Editing, and Best Visual Effects. Critics weren't nearly as kind to John McTiernan's masterpiece upon release, however, as it received rather mixed reviews before being reappraised years later to the immense acclaim it deserves. Die Hard was released as a summer blockbuster in July of '88, but it has since become a major Christmas classic, often being viewed around the holidays alongside more conventional holiday favorites, which is one of a million things that make it an all-timer. New York City policeman John McClane (Bruce Willis) is visiting his estranged wife (Bonnie Bedelia) and two daughters on Christmas Eve. He joins her at a holiday party in the headquarters of the Japanese-owned business she works for. But the festivities are interrupted by a group of terrorists who take over the exclusive high-rise, and everyone in it. Very soon McClane realizes that there's no one to save the hostages -- but him. Watch on Hulu 'Die Hard 2' Die Hard 2 (also referred to as Die Hard 2: Die Harder) is a rock-solid follow-up to its incomparable predecessor, and it is also streaming now on Hulu. The sequel once more followed John McClane as he takes on another group of terrorists, this time in a Washington, D.C.-based airport, where planes have been forced to fly over the airport with no way to land, on the verge of running out of fuel. McClane's adversary this time around was Col. William Stuart, played by William Sadler. Stuart is easily the most unhinged of John McClane's foes throughout the series, and he presents an unpredictable threat to McClane and the innocents trapped in this hostage situation. Die Hard 2 exceeded expectations at the box office, doubling the gross of the original movie, and by the end of 1990, it was the seventh highest-grossing movie of the year. Critics were easier on this one, as the sequel received mostly positive reviews upon release, primarily praising the action and tone of the film. Die Hard 2 remains a well-liked entry in this franchise and yet another fun Christmas action flick, but it admittedly fails to capture that same indescribable magic of the original, which it never really stood a chance at. John McClane attempts to avert disaster as rogue military operatives seize control of Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C. Watch on Hulu 'Die Hard with a Vengeance' The third film in the Die Hard series, which is also streaming on Hulu, found Bruce Willis teaming up with Samuel L. Jackson to take down the brother of Hans Gruber, Simon, played by Academy Award-winner Jeremy Irons. The film is the first to be set in New York, where McClane is finally seen in his own jurisdiction as he plays a literal game of 'Simon Says', hopefully leading him to Gruber and putting a stop to his plans to rob the Federal Reserve Building. Along the way, McClane strikes up an unlikely partnership with Samuel L. Jackson's Zeus, a Harlem-based store owner who gets mixed up with McClane's race against time. Die Hard with a Vengeance was a smash hit at the box office, becoming the 10th highest-grossing movie of 1995 worldwide with a haul of $100 million, not adjusted for inflation. However, this entry didn't do as well critically, receiving mixed reviews despite the return of John McTiernan behind the camera, as Die Hard 2 was helmed by director Renny Harlin. It has since become a fan-favorite and is widely considered by many to be the best of the Die Hard sequels. John McClane and a Harlem store owner are targeted by German terrorist Simon in New York City, where he plans to rob the Federal Reserve Building. Watch on Hulu 'Live Free or Die Hard' Arriving 12 years after Die Hard with a Vengeance, 2007's Live Free or Die Hard (streaming on Hulu) brought John McClane into a new generation as the New York City cop must join forces with a young hacker (Justin Long) to bring down cyberterrorist Thomas Gabriel, played by Timothy Olyphant. The choice to move the series into a more modern space and examine the growth of technology over the decades was a wise choice that helped this entry stand apart from the others. This was also the first and only Die Hard movie to be rated PG-13, which also helps with the distinction of this film among the series. Live Free or Die Hard ended up being the highest-grossing movie in the entire series, grossing $388 million worldwide. Critics were far more positive in their consensus of Live Free or Die Hard versus its predecessor, and it remains a generally liked entry among fans. The most controversial aspect of this fourth film was the PG-13 rating, which was amended for the fifth movie, for better or worse. Watch on Hulu 'A Good Day to Die Hard' The fifth and final Die Hard movie was 2013's A Good Day to Die Hard, also streaming on Hulu. This final entry sees John McClane teaming up with his now grown-up son Jack (Jai Courtney), who is revealed to be an undercover CIA operative on a mission in Russia. The two get mixed in with Russia's underworld and end up in a race to stop World War III in what is easily the goofiest series entry by far. A Good Day to Die Hard was a complete disappointment across the board. While the fifth Die Hard movie performed well enough overseas to get it just over $300 million worldwide, but only $67 million of that gross was from the United States, making it the lowest-grossing film in the series domestically. This wasn't helped by the abysmal reception from both critics and audiences and the instant reputation of being the worst film in the franchise. Director John Moore's vision for this film simply didn't match the tone of Die Hard, and the film ultimately comes off as a soulless cash-grab rather than a genuine John McClane adventure. Watch on Hulu The great Bruce Willis changed the face of the action genre when he superbly portrayed the wise-cracking John McClane in the epic Die Hard franchise. Having first achieved recognition as private detective David Addison on the dramedy series Moonlighting, the charismatic performer was catapulted to widespread fame with his star-making role as McClane in the blockbuster 1988 action staple Die Hard. The overwhelming success and popularity of the pictures helped establish Willis as a bona fide movie star and endearing American action hero, with the role serving as a pivotal moment in his dazzling career. The triumph of the original Die Hard installment led to four highly-anticipated, lucrative follow-up films, with the entire franchise going on to gross a combined worldwide total of $1.4 billion. Fans everywhere couldn't get enough of the foul-mouthed NYC detective John McClane, who iconic Die Hard villain Hans Gruber famously described as "just another American...who thinks he's John Wayne." Throughout the course of 25 years, a very weary McClane went head-to-head against a slew of sinister foes and terrifying terrorists, proving numerous times that, despite his no-nonsense attitude, he will do anything to protect innocent civilians and the people he cares about. With the unfortunate announcement that Willis is stepping away from acting, it's probable that we will never see another Die Hard movie. Fortunately, there are five of them (all available on Hulu), three of which are genuinely excellent and two that are solid action flicks. The chronological order of the Die Hard movies is the exact same as its order by release date. 20th Century Fox On July 15, 1988, the cinematic world was first introduced to the foul-mouthed, flippant NYPD Detective John McClane in the blockbuster action flick Die Hard, with the dynamite Bruce Willis tackling the role of the iconic reluctant hero. The groundbreaking '80s staple follows the authority-loathing, sardonic McClane as he unwittingly finds himself at the center of a terrorist plot at the Nakatomi Plaza in Los Angeles on Christmas Eve, commanded by German radical Hans Gruber and his menacing henchmen. The late and great Alan Rickman delivered a masterful performance as the ruthless leader Gruber, who holds the skyscraper hostage in order to steal $640 million in negotiable bonds. The vicious villain is considered one of the greatest bad guys in action movie history, with the role being lauded as one of Rickman's best performances; the diabolical character was such a hit that his estranged brother Simon sought revenge in the third installment. 20th Century Fox Many high-profile actors were offered the notorious role of John McClane, with stars like Sylvester Stallone, Harrison Ford, and Arnold Schwarzenegger being considered for the exciting part. The casting of Willis, however, helped redefine the action genre, with the character presenting a somewhat 'normal,' everyday man as opposed to the invincible, gigantic, muscle-bound heroes previously depicted. The comedic talent of Bruce Willis also changed the game, perfecting the idea of sarcastic quips and witty one-liners in action flicks. John McClane is a relatable and wary protagonist, and Die Hard helped establish Willis as a sarcastic superstar known worldwide, raising the actor's status from television performer to a high-profile cinematic presence. Die Hard was a massive hit upon its release, grossing over $140 million ($340 million adjusted for inflation today) on a roughly $30 million budget, earning five Academy Award nominations while cementing Willis' status as a prominent leading man and granting Rickman celebrity status in Hollywood. The big-screen extravaganza has been heavily lauded as arguably the best action movie of the '80s (if not all time), and launched a lucrative franchise that spawned four successful sequels, beginning with 1990's Die Hard 2. In the highly-anticipated follow-up, the always unruly John McClane once again finds himself having to save the world from nefarious terrorists who have taken over the air traffic control system at an airport. 20th Century Fox Like its critically-acclaimed predecessor, the 1990 action-thriller Die Hard 2 (also known as Die Harder) takes place on Christmas Eve and focuses on Mr. Congeniality himself John McClane as he arrives at the Dulles International Airport to pick up his wife Holly. While awaiting her incoming flight, the now LAPD lieutenant makes the shocking discovery that rogue military operatives have seized power over the air traffic control system. McClane must once again contend with malicious terrorists as well as a disgruntled military commander and airport authorities to save not only his wife but the lives of countless others from a devastating plane crash. In the second installment of the gripping franchise, McClane begrudgingly decides to once again enlist the help of his friend, Sergeant Al Powell (Reginald VelJohnson) to stop the terrifying attack. The main villain of the picture is disgraced former Colonel William Stuart who, along with his ex-military sympathizers, plan to rescue drug lord Ramon Esperanza from impending justice by holding the airport and its occupants hostage. McClane must act fast if he wants to rescue the incoming airplanes (and his wife) from a fiery inferno, as Stuart hacked into the electrical equipment controlling the planes and cut off power to the airport. The screenplay of the adrenaline-pumping movie was adapted from the book 58 Minutes, with its villains being based on those involved in the Iran-Contra affair, a political scandal that occurred during the Reagan Administration in the 1980s. Bruce Willis once again headlined the epic flick, with Bonnie Bedelia (Holly), Reginald VelJohnson (Powell), and William Atherton (reporter Richard Thornburg) reprising their roles from the original; Franco Nero, William Sadler, and John Amos were introduced as the primary bad guys in the winning sequel. Despite the film being an even bigger hit with audiences at the box office (grossing $240 million worldwide), Willis himself was not a huge fan, having retrospectively expressed, "The second was my least favorite and the least fun. Far too self-referentially precious, the story was all over the place, and suffered from severe un-claustrophobic-ness." The action legend would later find satisfaction with the 1995 follow-up, as Die Hard with a Vengeance is widely regarded as the best sequel of the franchise. Back to Top 20th Century Fox John McTiernan (director of the first installment) returned to helm the 1995 action-thriller Die Hard with a Vengeance, with the electrifying sequel finding a down-on-his-luck John McClane joining forces with Harlem shopkeeper Zeus Carver in an effort to stop German terrorist Simon (Hans Gruber's brother) from blowing up popular attractions in New York City and extracting revenge. The iconic Samuel L. Jackson and Jeremy Irons joined the Die Hard franchise as Zeus and Simon, respectively, with the mysterious villain forcing McClane to play a disturbing and twisted version of Simon Says while presenting dangerous challenges and riddles. Jackson appears as the hesitant store owner Zeus, who saves McClane from Simon's first violent challenge and teams up with the Lieutenant to thwart the bad guy's corrupt scheme. In the third installment of the series, McClane has seen better days, as the caustic hero is separated from his wife Holly, battling alcoholism, and has been suspended from the police force; he is called back to duty when Simon specifically requests his appearance, or else he'll continue wreaking havoc on the city and its civilians. Once again, McClane is forced to fight against a conniving criminal, but this time he has a partner to rely on with Zeus hesitantly aiding him along the way. Irons' Simon Gruber is a formidable foe in Die Hard with a Vengeance, using his anger over his brother's death as a cover-up to rob the Federal Reserve Building. Die Hard with a Vengeance was both a critical and commercial hit, earning over $366 million and becoming the highest-grossing film of the year, with the action stunts and performances by Willis, Irons, and Jackson being lauded. Since its initial release, the flick has amassed a large cult following and has been considered by reviewers and fans alike as the best sequel of the stimulating series. Esteemed critic Roger Ebert gave a glowing analysis of the picture, calling it a "wind-up action toy, cleverly made, and delivered with high energy. It delivers just what it advertises, with a vengeance." The overwhelming success of the Die Hard installment surprisingly didn't spawn another sequel right away, with audiences having to wait 12 years to see 2007's Live Free or Die Hard. 20th Century Fox After a 12-year absence from the big-screen, everyone's favorite wise-cracking hero John McClane made a rousing return to the cinema in 2007's Live Free or Die Hard, with the NYPD detective this time being forced to work with a savvy young hacker to combat an elite cyber-terrorist hacking into the government and computers at the FBI. Loosely based on John Carlin's article "A Farewell to Arms" written for Wired magazine, the lively film introduces exciting new talent to the celebrated franchise, with Justin Long appearing as hacker-turned-white-hat Matt Farrell and a thrilling Timothy Olyphant joining as terrorist mastermind Thomas Gabriel. Other big names such as Maggie Q, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, and Kevin Smith co-star, appearing as both friends and foes of the resilient McClane. Despite the film studio being eager to once again capitalize on the money-making franchise, Live Free or Die Hard went through development hell even with the cyber-terrorism premise being greenlit. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the fourth film was stalled indefinitely until talks once again resumed in 2005. In the latest action-packed outing, McClane learns that the villain Thomas Gabriel and his fellow terrorists are in the midst of a "fire sale" via their cyber-warfare hacking, targeting the national infrastructure in a coordinate attack. His crusade to stop the deplorable criminals takes a personal turn when his estranged daughter Lucy and computer whiz Matt are captured by the dangerous terrorists. Live Free or Die Hard was praised by fans and critics, with many commending the picture as an outstanding return to form for the franchise (and the film retaining an 82% rating on Rotten Tomatoes). Earning over $388 million worldwide, it is the highest-grossing installment of the Die Hard series and the only one to receive a PG-13 rating, much to Bruce Willis' initial dismay; the actor worried viewers would miss the colorful usage of profanity and edginess but the film's thrilling action sequences and biting humor ultimately made up for the lack of f-bombs. Regardless, the seasoned star was thrilled with the final results of the picture, telling NewsBlaze it's a throwback to the original and saying, "I would put this one-two with the first film. And it's an interesting thing now, over 20 years, to have four films that are bookended by two really great episodes in the storyline." Willis would return for a fifth and final Die Hard six years later, with 2013's A Good Day to Die Hard. Back to Top 20th Century Fox For his final act as the no-nonsense John McClane, Bruce Willis leaves behind the streets of New York City to rescue his estranged son John "Jack" McClane Jr. after the young man is arrested in Moscow for murder in 2013's A Good Day to Die Hard. Jai Courtney joins the franchise as Jack, McClane's aforementioned child who is actually an undercover CIA agent and is who is less-than-pleased at the arrival of his father John. The duo set aside their differences in order to takedown underworld forces and protect a Russian government whistleblower Jack has been tasked with keeping safe. Sebastian Koch appears as the film's main antagonist Yuri Komarov, portraying the double-crossing villain Jack was initially supposed to protect at all costs. On what ended up becoming the actor's last on-screen portrayal of McClane, Willis expressed in a 2013 interview, "I have a warm spot in my heart for Die Hard..... it's just the sheer novelty of being able to play the same character over 25 years and still be asked back is fun. It's much more challenging to have to do a film again and try to compete with myself, which is what I do in Die Hard. I try to improve my work every time." Though Willis was eager for the chance of doing a sixth and final film and properly retiring the iconic character, the star's desire was thwarted due to his decision to step away from Hollywood and retiire after his aphasia diagnosis. Though perhaps not the note the legendary performer would have liked to go out on with John McClane, A Good Day to Die Hard still demonstrated Willis' and the reluctant hero's box office draw, with the final installment earning over $300 million despite mainly negative reviews. The Die Hard films are undoubtedly some cinema's most outstanding action flicks, with McClane landing on numerous lists as one of the greatest movie characters and heroes of all time. When Willis was first cast as the flippant famed detective, the BBC accurately called the decision "an excellent casting choice as a sardonic action hero." Willis would only prove that sentiment right time and time again over the course of 25 years playing McClane, proving that you don't need a fancy cape or bulging Schwarzenegger muscles to be a respected and endearing big screen champion to the masses. Back to Top 1988 film by John McTiernan This article is about the 1988 action film. For other uses, see Die Hard (disambiguation). Die HardTheatrical release posterDirected byJohn McTiernanScreenplay by Jeb Stuart Steven E. de Souza Based onNothing Lasts Foreverby Roderick ThorpProduced by Lawrence Gordon Joel Silver Starring Bruce Willis Alan Rickman Alexander Godunov Bonnie Bedelia CinematographyJan de BontEdited by Frank J. Urioste John F. Link Music byMichael KamenProductioncompanies 20th Century Fox Gordon Company Silver Pictures Distributed by20th Century FoxRelease dates July 12, 1988 (1988-07-12) (Avco Theater) July 15, 1988 (1988-07-15) (United States) Running time132 minutes[1]CountryUnited StatesLanguageEnglishBudget$25–35 millionBox office$139.8–141.5 million Die Hard is a 1988 American action film directed by John McTiernan and written by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza, based on the 1979 novel Nothing Lasts Forever by Roderick Thorp. It stars Bruce Willis, Alan Rickman, Alexander Godunov, and Bonnie Bedelia, with Reginald VelJohnson, William Atherton, Paul Gleason, and Hart Bochner in supporting roles. Die Hard follows a New York City police detective, John McClane (Willis), who becomes entangled in a terrorist takeover of a Los Angeles skyscraper while visiting his estranged wife during a Christmas Eve party. Stuart was hired by 20th Century Fox to adapt Thorp's novel in 1987. His first draft was greenlit immediately, as the studio was eager for a summer blockbuster the following year. The role of McClane was turned down by a host of the decade's most popular actors, including Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone. Known mainly for work on television, Willis was paid $5 million for his involvement, placing him among Hollywood's highest-paid actors. The deal was seen as a poor investment by industry professionals and attracted significant controversy towards the film prior to its release. Filming took place between November 1987 and March 1988, on a $25 million to $35 million budget and almost entirely on location in and around Fox Plaza in Los Angeles. Expectations for Die Hard were low; some marketing materials omitted Willis's image, ostensibly because the publicity team determined that the setting was as important as McClane. Upon its release in July 1988, initial reviews were mixed: criticism focused on its violence, plot, and Willis's performance, while McTiernan's direction and Rickman's charismatic portrayal of the villain Hans Gruber were praised. Defying predictions, Die Hard grossed approximately $140 million, becoming the year's tenth-highest-grossing film and the highest-grossing action film. Receiving four Academy Award nominations, it elevated Willis to leading-man status and made Rickman a celebrity. Die Hard has been critically re-evaluated and is now considered one of the greatest action films of all time. It is considered to have revitalized the action genre, largely due to its depiction of McClane as a vulnerable and fallible protagonist, in contrast to the muscle-bound and invincible heroes of other films of the period. Retrospective commentators also identified and analyzed its themes of vengeance, masculinity, gender roles, and American anxieties over foreign influences. Due to its Christmas setting, Die Hard is often named one of the best Christmas films of all time, although its status as a Christmas film is disputed. The film produced a host of imitators; the term "Die Hard" became a shorthand for plots featuring overwhelming odds in a restricted environment, such as "Die Hard on a bus" in relation to Speed. It created a franchise comprising the sequels Die Hard 2 (1990), Die Hard with a Vengeance (1995), Live Free or Die Hard (2007), and A Good Day to Die Hard (2013), plus video games, comics, and other merchandise. Deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" by the United States Library of Congress, Die Hard was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry in 2017. On Christmas Eve, New York City Police Department (NYPD) Detective John McClane arrives in Los Angeles, hoping to reconcile with his estranged wife, Holly, at a party held by her employer, the Nakatomi Corporation. He is driven to Nakatomi Plaza by a limo driver, Argyle, who offers to wait for McClane in the garage. While McClane washes himself, the tower is seized by the German radical Hans Gruber and his heavily armed team, including Karl and Theo. Everyone in the tower is taken hostage except for McClane, who slips away, and Argyle, who remains oblivious to events. Gruber is posing as a terrorist to steal the $640 million in untraceable bearer bonds in the building's vault.[a] He kills executive Joseph Takagi after failing to extract the access code from him and tasks Theo with breaking into the vault. The terrorists are alerted to McClane's presence, and Karl's brother, Tony, is sent after him. McClane kills Tony and takes his weapon and radio, which he uses to contact the skeptical Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Sergeant Al Powell is sent to investigate. Meanwhile, McClane kills more terrorists and recovers their bag of C-4 and detonators. Realizing Powell is about to leave, having found nothing amiss, McClane drops a terrorist's corpse onto his car. After Powell calls for backup, a SWAT team attempts to storm the building but is counterattacked by the terrorists. McClane throws some C-4 down an elevator shaft, causing an explosion that kills some of the terrorists and ends the counterattack. Holly's co-worker Harry Ellis attempts to negotiate on Gruber's behalf but is killed by Gruber when McClane refuses to surrender. While checking the explosives on the roof, Gruber encounters McClane and pretends to be an escaped hostage; McClane gives Gruber a gun. Gruber attempts to shoot McClane but finds the weapon is unloaded, and he is saved only by the intervention of other terrorists. McClane escapes but is injured by shattered glass and loses the detonators. Outside, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents take control. They order the power to be shut off, which, as Gruber had anticipated, disables the final vault lock so his team can collect the bonds. The FBI agrees to Gruber's demand for a helicopter, intending to send helicopter gunships to eliminate the group. McClane realizes Gruber plans to blow the roof to kill the hostages and fake his team's deaths. Karl, enraged by Tony's death, attacks McClane and is seemingly killed. Gruber sees a news report by Richard Thornburg on McClane's children and infers that he is Holly's husband. The hostages are taken to the roof while Gruber keeps Holly with him. McClane drives the hostages from the roof just before Gruber detonates it and destroys the approaching FBI helicopters. Meanwhile, Theo retrieves an escape vehicle from the parking garage but is knocked out by Argyle, who has been following events on the limo's CB radio. A weary and battered McClane finds Holly with Gruber and his remaining henchman. McClane seemingly surrenders to Gruber and is about to be shot but grabs his concealed service pistol taped to his back and uses his last two bullets to wound Gruber and kill his accomplice. Gruber crashes through a window but grabs onto Holly's wristwatch and makes a last-ditch attempt to kill the pair. McClane unclasps the watch, and Gruber falls to his death. Outside, Karl ambushes McClane and Holly; Karl is shot dead by Powell. Holly punches Thornburg when he attempts to interview McClane. Argyle crashes through the parking garage door in the limo and drives McClane and Holly away together. Bruce Willis in 2018Alan Rickman in 2011 Bruce Willis as John McClane, a New York City police detective[2] Alan Rickman as Hans Gruber, the ruthless leader of the terrorists[3] Alexander Godunov as Karl, Gruber's second-in-command[2] Bonnie Bedelia as Holly Gennaro-McClane, a high-ranking Nakatomi executive and John's estranged wife[4] Reginald VelJohnson as Al Powell, an LAPD sergeant[5] Paul Gleason as Dwayne T. Robinson, the LAPD Deputy Chief[6] De'voreaux White as Argyle, John's limousine driver[5] William Atherton as Richard Thornburg, an unscrupulous TV reporter[7][8] Clarence Gilyard as Theo, Gruber's tech specialist[4] Hart Bochner as Harry Ellis, a sleazy Nakatomi executive[9] James Shigeta as Joseph Yoshinobu Takagi, Nakatomi's head executive[4] Other cast members include Gruber's henchmen: Bruno Doyon as Franco, Andreas Wisniewski as Tony, Joey Plewa as Alexander, Lorenzo Caccialanza as Marco, Gerard Bonn as Kristoff, Dennis Hayden as Eddie, Al Leong as Uli, Gary Roberts as Heinrich, Hans Buhringer as Fritz, and Wilhelm von Homburg as James. Robert Davi and Grand L. Bush appear as FBI Special Agents Big Johnson and Little Johnson, respectively, Tracy Reiner appears as Thornburg's assistant, and Taylor Fry and Noah Land make minor appearances as McClane's children Lucy McClane and John Jr.[10] Director John McTiernan in 2014 The development of Die Hard began in 1987, when screenwriter Jeb Stuart was in dire financial straits. His script purchased by Columbia Pictures had been abandoned and a contract at Walt Disney Pictures was not providing him with sufficient income. Stuart had six weeks between contracted work so his agent Jeremy Zimmer contacted Lloyd Levin, the head of development at the Gordon Company, a producing arm of 20th Century Fox.[11] Levin asked Stuart to work on an adaptation of the 1979 novel Nothing Lasts Forever written by former private investigator Roderick Thorp.[11][12] Thorp had been inspired to write Nothing Lasts Forever by a dream he had—in which armed assailants chase a man through a building—after watching the 1974 disaster film The Towering Inferno.[11][13][14] Fox had adapted the book's 1966 predecessor, The Detective, for the 1968 film starring Frank Sinatra as NYPD detective Joe Leland, and purchased the sequel rights before Nothing Lasts Forever had been written.[11][13] Levin gave Stuart creative freedom as long as he retained the Christmas-in-Los-Angeles setting; the concept, he considered, would provide an interesting aesthetic.[11] The film was pitched as "Rambo in an office building", referring to the successful Rambo film series.[15] Producers Lawrence Gordon and Joel Silver hired director John McTiernan because of his work with them on the successful 1987 action film Predator.[16][17][18] McTiernan agreed to direct on the condition that the film would have "some joy" and not simply contain "mean, nasty acts", seen in other terrorist films.[13] Stuart began working 18-hour days at his office at Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, which left him exhausted and "on edge".[11] After an argument with his wife, he went for a drive and saw a box in his lane; unable to avoid it, he was forced to drive over it and discovered it to be empty. According to Stuart, he pulled over on the side of the freeway, his "heart pounding". From this, Stuart conceived a central theme of the story of a man who should have apologized to his wife before a catastrophe. He returned home to reconcile with his wife and wrote 35 pages that night.[11] To shape the McClanes' relationship, Stuart also drew upon the marital problems of his peers, including divorces and ex-wives reverting to use their maiden name.[11] Jeb Stuart wrote his initial draft in his office at the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California. John McClane was named John Ford initially, but 20th Century Fox felt this was disrespectful to the deceased director of the same name. Stuart chose McClane as a "good strong Scottish name", based on his own Celtic heritage. He described the character as a flawed hero who learns a lesson in the worst possible situation and becomes a better, but not a different, person.[11] Having no experience writing action films, Stuart drew on his experience writing thrillers, focusing on making the audience care about McClane, Holly, and their reconciliation.[11] As Stuart pitched his story to executives, Gordon interrupted him, told him to complete a draft, and left the meeting. Stuart finished his first draft just under six weeks later.[11] Stuart credits Levin for helping him understand Nothing Lasts Forever.[11] He adapted many sequences faithfully, including a C-4 charge being thrown down an elevator shaft and the book's central character, Joe Leland, leaping from the roof. However, the novel is told entirely from Leland's perspective, and events he is not present for are not detailed.[11][19][20] Its tone is also more cynical and nihilistic: Leland visits his drug-addicted daughter at the Klaxon building, and she dies having fallen from the building alongside villain Anton Gruber, who is using naïve male and female guerrilla soldiers to rob the building because of Klaxon's support for a dictatorial government. This made their motivations less clear and Leland more conflicted about killing them, especially the women. Leland is written as an experienced older man working as a high-powered security consultant.[11][18][20] Stuart rejected the novel's tone for being "too sad", and believed an older action hero—Leland being over 60—was nonsensical. Stuart created new material for scenes when McClane is not present, expanding upon or introducing characters: he gave Powell a wife and children, allowing him to relate more closely to McClane; and Argyle, whose novel counterpart disappears early in the story, is present throughout Stuart's draft, supporting McClane by broadcasting rap music over the terrorists' radios. Among the script's original characters is the unscrupulous journalist Richard Thornburg.[11] A fan of prominent Western film actor John Wayne, Stuart was inspired to carry a Western motif throughout the script, including cowboy lingo. He befriended a construction superintendent at the under-construction Fox Plaza in Los Angeles, allowing him access to the building to gain ideas on how to lay out the characters and scenes. He delivered the finished screenplay in June 1987. It was greenlit the following day, in part because 20th Century Fox needed a summer blockbuster for 1988.[11] Willis chose Bonnie Bedelia (pictured in 1974) to portray Holly Gennero-McClane after he saw her performance in Heart Like a Wheel (1983). As Die Hard was based on the novel sequel to the film adaptation of The Detective, the studio was contractually obliged to offer Frank Sinatra the role. Sinatra, who was 70 at the time, declined.[12][13] The role was offered to various major stars including Sylvester Stallone, Richard Gere, Clint Eastwood, Harrison Ford,[17][21] Burt Reynolds,[22] Nick Nolte, Mel Gibson, Don Johnson, Richard Dean Anderson,[12] Paul Newman,[23] James Caan,[24] and Al Pacino.[25] The prevailing action archetype of the era was a muscle-bound, invincible macho man like Arnold Schwarzenegger, who was offered the role, but he wanted to branch out into comedy and turned it down to star in Twins (1988).[12] Willis was known mainly for his comedic role in the romantic comedy television series Moonlighting, starring opposite Cybill Shepherd. He declined the role because of his contractual obligations to Moonlighting, but when Shepherd became pregnant, the show's production was stopped for eleven weeks, giving Willis enough time to take the role.[12] McTiernan's girlfriend had a chance meeting with a representative of CinemaScore and asked them for analysis of Willis as the star. Their analysis showed that casting Willis would not have a negative impact; his participation was confirmed two weeks later.[26] The choice was controversial as Willis had only starred in one other film, the moderately successful comedy Blind Date (1987).[12][27] At the time, there was also a clear distinction between film and television actors. Though films like Ghostbusters (1984) had demonstrated that television stars could lead a blockbuster film, other television actors like Shelley Long and Bill Cosby had failed in their recent attempts to make the transition.[17][28] Willis received $5 million for the role, giving him a salary comparable to more successful, established film actors like Dustin Hoffman, Warren Beatty, and Robert Redford.[16] 20th Century Fox president Leonard Goldberg justified the figure by saying Die Hard needed an actor of Willis's potential,[16] and Gordon said that Willis's everyman persona was essential to conveying the idea that the hero could actually fail.[29] Other Fox sources were reported as saying the studio was desperate for a star after being turned down by so many popular actors.[30] Willis said, "They paid me what they thought I was worth for the film, and for them."[31] He described the character as unlike the larger-than-life characters portrayed by Stallone or Schwarzenegger, saying "even though he's a hero, he is just a regular guy. He's an ordinary guy who's been thrown into extraordinary circumstances".[27] Willis drew upon his working-class upbringing in South Jersey for the character, including "that attitude and disrespect for authority, that gallows sense of humor, the reluctant hero".[12] Rickman was already in his early 40s as he made his screen debut as Hans Gruber. He was cast by Silver, who had seen him perform in a Broadway version of Les Liaisons Dangereuses, playing the villainous Vicomte de Valmont.[12][32] Bedelia was cast at Willis's suggestion after he saw her in the 1983 biographical film Heart Like a Wheel.[33] VelJohnson appeared as Al Powell in his first major film role at the suggestion of casting director Jackie Burch, with whom he had worked previously. Robert Duvall, Gene Hackman, Laurence Fishburne, and Wesley Snipes were considered for the role.[34][35][36] Ellis is portrayed by Hart Bochner, an acquaintance of Silver. His role was shot in chronological order over three weeks. McTiernan had wanted the character to be suave like actor Cary Grant, but Bochner conceived of the character's motivations coming from cocaine use and insecurity. McTiernan hated the performance initially until he noticed Gordon and Silver were entertained by Bochner's antics.[37] John McClane's catchphrase "Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker" was inspired by western actor Roy Rogers's (pictured) own "Yippee-ki-yay, kids". Screenwriter Steven E. de Souza rewrote Stuart's script because he had experience in blending action and comedy.[38] He approached the story as if Gruber were the protagonist. He said, "If [Gruber] had not planned the robbery and put it together, [McClane] would have just gone to the party and reconciled or not with his wife. You should sometimes think about looking at your movie through the point of view of the villain who is really driving the narrative."[19] De Souza used blueprints of Fox Plaza to help him lay out the story and character locations within the building.[38] The script continued to undergo changes up to and during filming. Several subplots and traits for characters other than McClane were created during the first few weeks of filming because Willis was still working on Moonlighting. He would film the show for up to ten hours and then work on Die Hard at night. McTiernan gave Willis time off to rest and tasked De Souza with adding the new scenes. These included

scenes with Holly's housekeeper, Holly confronting Gruber following Takagi's death, an introductory scene for Thornburg, and more moments between Powell and his fellow officers.[38] Silver wanted a scene between McClane and Gruber before the film's denouement, but De Souza could not think of a plausible scenario until he happened to overhear Rickman affecting an American accent. He realized this would allow Gruber to disguise himself when he met McClane, and the earlier scene of Takagi's murder was reworked to conceal Gruber's identity from McClane. Due to the addition of the Gruber/McClane meeting scene, a different one in which McClane kills Theo was excised.[38] In Stuart's original script, Die Hard took place over three days, but McTiernan was inspired to have it take place over a single night like Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. He did not want to use terrorists as the villains, as he considered them to be "too mean", and avoided focusing on the terrorists' politics in favor of making them thieves driven by monetary pursuits; he felt this would make it more suitable summer entertainment.[39] McClane's character was not fully realized until almost halfway through production. McTiernan and Willis had determined that McClane is a man who does not like himself much but is doing the best he can in a bad situation.[39] McClane's catchphrase, "Yipee-ki-yay, motherfucker", was inspired by old cowboy lingo, including cowboy actor Roy Rogers's own "Yippee-ki-yah, kids", to emphasize his all-American character.[12][19] There was a debate over whether to use "Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker" or "yippee-ti-yay, motherfucker"; Willis endorsed the former.[12] Fox Plaza in Century City, Los Angeles, served as the setting for Nakatomi Plaza. Principal photography began in November 1987, and concluded by early March 1988, with an approximate $25–$35 million budget.[b][c] Filming took place almost entirely in and around Fox Plaza in Century City, situated on the Avenue of the Stars.[18][44][45] The location was chosen late in production by production designer Jackson De Govia.[39] A mostly unoccupied building was needed, which the under-construction Fox Plaza offered;[44] it was secured with two main conditions: no filming during the day and no damage from explosions.[18] Cinematographer Jan de Bont said the building's design was distinct, making it a character on its own, and clear views of the building were available from a distance, enabling establishing shots as McClane approaches it. The surrounding city could be seen from within the building, enhancing the realism.[44] De Bont frequently used handheld cameras to film closer to the characters, creating a more cinematic "intimacy". Very little of the film was storyboarded beforehand because De Bont believed intricate storyboarding made his job redundant. Instead, he and McTiernan would discuss that day's filming in detail, and the feeling or sensation they wanted to convey. De Bont was more concerned with creating a dramatic rather than an attractive shot. He cited the use of real flares in the film that generated unpredictable smoke and sometimes obscured the image.[44] Willis's first day on set was on November 2, 1987. He came straight from filming Moonlighting to shoot one of his most pivotal scenes, where McClane leaps from a rooftop as it explodes behind him, saved only by a length of firehose.[12] Willis found acting in Die Hard difficult because it differed from previous experiences in that he was often alone, not having any personal encounters with others.[31] He did not spend much time with the rest of the cast between takes, opting to spend it with his new partner, Demi Moore. In contrast to their on-screen dynamics, Bedelia and VelJohnson spent most of their time between scenes with Rickman.[46][47] When asked to throw Holly to the floor, Rickman refused because he believed it was not a fitting action for the "civilized" Gruber and that Holly, "a self-possessed career woman", would not have let him.[48] The film's ending had not been finalized when filming began. In the finished film, Theo retrieves an ambulance from the truck the terrorists arrived in to use as an escape vehicle, but as this was a late addition, the truck the terrorists had been filmed arriving in was too small to hold an ambulance. Another scene, showing the terrorists synchronizing their TAG Heuer watches, also showed the truck was empty; this scene had to be deleted, leading to other necessary changes. As scripted, McClane realizes that the American hostage he encounters is Gruber because of the distinctive TAG Heuer watch he observed on the other terrorists; the watches were no longer an established plot point.[39][49] It necessitated the introduction of a heroic scene for Argyle, who gets to stop Theo's escape. De'voreaux actually punched Gilyard during the scene, which was added in only in the last 10 days of filming.[38][47] There was flexibility with some roles, depending on the actors' performances, meaning some characters were kept in the film longer and others killed off sooner.[38] The actors were also given some room to improvise, like Theo's line, "The quarterback is toast", Bochner's "Hans, bubby, I'm your white knight", and the henchman Uli stealing a chocolate bar during the SWAT assault.[37][47] McTiernan took stylistic influence from French New Wave cinema when editing the film. He recruited Frank J. Urioste and John F. Link to edit scenes together while in mid-motion, contrary to the mainstream style of editing used at the time.[50] Main article: Die Hard (soundtrack) Michael Kamen – Assault on the Tower Kamen used samples from various classic songs and sleigh bells to create a score that highlighted the violence Problems playing this file? See media help. Before hiring composer Michael Kamen, McTiernan knew he wanted to include Beethoven's 9th Symphony (commonly known as "Ode to Joy"), having heard it in Stanley Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange (1971).[51] Kamen objected to "tarnishing" the piece in an action film and offered to misuse German composer Richard Wagner's music instead.[51][52] Once McTiernan explained how the 9th Symphony had been used in A Clockwork Orange to highlight the ultra-violence, Kamen had a better understanding of McTiernan's intentions.[51] In exchange, Kamen insisted that they also license the use of "Singin' in the Rain" (1952) (also used in A Clockwork Orange) and "Winter Wonderland" (1934).[52] He mixed the melodies of "Ode to Joy", "Winter Wonderland", and "Singin' in the Rain" into his score, mainly to underscore the villains.[50][53][52] The samples of "Ode to Joy" are played in slightly lower keys to sound more menacing; the references build to a performance of the symphony when Gruber finally accesses the Nakatomi vault.[52][54] The score also references "Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!".[55][56][53] Kamen initially saw a mostly incomplete version of Die Hard and was unimpressed.[52] He saw the film as primarily about a "phenomenal bad guy" who made McClane seem less important.[52] Kamen was dismissive of film scores, believing they could not stand alone from the film.[57] His original score incorporates pizzicato and arco strings, brass, woodwinds and sleigh bells added during moments of menace to counter their festive meaning.[56][54] There are other uses of classical diegetic music in the film; the musicians at the party play Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 by Johann Sebastian Bach.[54] McTiernan did not like a piece created for the final scene in which Karl attempts to kill McClane, and decided to use a temporary track that was already in place: a piece of James Horner's unused score for Aliens (1986). Cues are also used from the 1987 action film Man on Fire.[39][55] Die Hard also features "Christmas in Hollis" by Run-DMC, which would go on to be considered a Christmas classic, in part because of its use in the film.[58] The perception of film stunts changed shortly before production of Die Hard following a fatal accident on the set of Twilight Zone: The Movie (1983), and a push was made to prioritize a film's crew over the film itself.[59] Even so, Willis insisted on performing many of his own stunts, including rolling down steps and standing on top of an active elevator.[12][44] The first scene he shot was his leap from the top of Nakatomi Plaza with a firehose wrapped around his waist. The stunt involved a 25-foot (7.6 m) leap from a five-story parking garage ledge onto an airbag as a 60-foot (18 m) wall of flame exploded behind him. He considered it to be one of his toughest stunts.[12][27] The explosive force pushed him towards the edge of the airbag and the crew was concerned he had died.[12] Stuntman Ken Bates stood in for Willis when his character is hanging from the building.[60] Alan Rickman was suspended from a raised platform and dropped onto an airbag. To capture the descent, an automated system controlled the camera's focus ring to keep Rickman in focus. A set was used for the following scene where McClane shoots out a window to re-enter the building. It was shot approximately halfway into the filming schedule so that all involved had gained more stunt experience. The window was made of fragile sugar glass that took two hours to set up, and there were only a few takes for this reason. Instead of a hoist, a team of stuntmen positioned below the window dragged the hose and pulled Willis towards the edge, as they could better control Willis's fall if he went over.[59] Editor Frank Urioste kept the scene where McClane falls down a ventilation shaft and catches onto a lower opening; Willis's stuntman accidentally fell further than intended.[39] During a scene where McClane shoots a terrorist through a table, Willis suffered a permanent two-thirds hearing loss in his left ear caused by firing loud blank cartridges close to his head.[61][62] For Gruber's fall from Nakatomi Plaza, Rickman was dropped between 20 and 70 feet (6 and 21 m); reports are inconsistent.[39][44][63] He was suspended on a raised platform and dropped onto a blue screen airbag.[39][63] This allowed the background behind him to be composited with footage taken from Fox Plaza and falling confetti that looked like bearer bonds. Rickman had to fall backward onto the bag, something stuntmen avoid to control their fall.[63] McTiernan convinced Rickman by demonstrating the stunt himself and falling onto a pile of cardboard boxes.[59] Rickman was told he would be dropped on a count of three, but he was let go earlier to elicit a genuine look of surprise. McTiernan said, "there's no way he could fake that".[39][59] The first take was used, but McTiernan convinced Rickman to perform a second one as backup.[63] Capturing the stunt was difficult because it was impossible for a human operator to refocus the camera fast enough to prevent the image from blurring as Rickman fell away.[59] Supervised by visual effects producer Richard Edlund, Boss Film Studios engineered an automated system using a computer that rapidly refocused the camera via a motor on its focus ring.[63] A wide-angle lens camera shooting at 270 frames per second was used, creating footage that played 10 times slower than normal. Despite these innovations, the camera struggled to keep Rickman entirely in focus during his 1.5-second fall; the scene cuts away from Rickman as the usable footage runs out. To complete Gruber's fatal descent, Bates was lowered 318 feet (97 m) from Fox Plaza in a harness that slowed his fall as he neared the ground.[59][63][64] Some of the Fox Plaza residents, frustrated by the debris and destruction around the building, refused to turn off their office lights for exterior shots of the Plaza.[64] Months of negotiations took place for permission to drive a SWAT vehicle up the steps of Fox Plaza. A railing knocked over during shooting was never replaced.[39][45] Small explosives moving along a guidewire were disguised as the terrorist rockets, giving the appearance of them striking the vehicle. In the scene where McClane throws C4 down the elevator shaft to stop the assault, the effects team unwittingly blew out every window on one floor of the building.[44] The final helicopter scene took six months of preparation, and only two hours were set aside to film it. It took three attempts above Fox Plaza, and nine camera crews filming with twenty-four different cameras.[39][44] De Bont said the different angles enhanced the on-location realism.[44] Mortar-like devices filled with propane were used for explosions. They took ten minutes to install and offered a six-second burst of flame.[59] The explosion of the Nakatomi rooftop was created using a miniature model; this was the only miniature used in the film.[44] Because Hans Buhringer (Fritz) was an inexperienced actor and filming was behind schedule, a Native American stuntman was put in a blond wig and equipped with squibs to capture the character's death in one take.[47] To prevent the in-building locations looking similar because of the standard fluorescent office lighting, De Bont concealed small film lights in high locations. He controlled these to create more dynamic and dramatic lighting. This gave him the opportunity to use unusual light positioning. He also placed fluorescent tubes on the floor in one scene to indicate they had not been installed.[44] The shifting nature of the filming script meant some sets were designed before it was known what they were to be used for.[39] The Nakatomi Building's 30th floor—where the hostages are held—was one of the few sets.[38][39] It contained a recreation of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house Fallingwater. De Govia reasoned that it reflected the contemporary trend of Japanese corporations buying up American corporate assets. An early design for the Nakatomi logo was too reminiscent of a swastika and it was re-designed to look closer to a samurai warrior's helmet. A 380-foot-long (120 m) matte painting provided the city backdrop as viewed from inside the building's 30th floor. It featured animated lights and other lighting techniques to present both moving traffic, daytime and nighttime.[39] See also: 1988 in film The logo for Die Hard The summer of 1988 was expected by film industry executives to be dominated by action and comedy films, although a broader range of films were released that year.[41][65] More films targeted older audiences rather than teenagers, a reflection of the increasing age of the average audience member.[65] Sequels to successful films, Crocodile Dundee II and Rambo III, were predicted to control the May box office and break opening weekend revenue records. Industry executives also had high expectations for the comedies Coming to America and Who Framed Roger Rabbit.[41] Expectations for Die Hard were low compared to its action film competition —the Schwarzenegger-starring Red Heat and Clint Eastwood's The Dead Pool. The New York Times noted that Die Hard, and the comedies Big Top Pee-wee and Bull Durham, would be closely scrutinized by the industry for success or failure. Die Hard was singled out for Willis's salary, and the failure earlier that year of his previous film, the western Sunset, which brought into question his leading man capabilities.[41] Lawrence Gordon agreed that not using a major action star like Stallone or Eastwood meant audience interest in Die Hard was lower than it might have been. The larger salaries paid to these stars were based on the built-in audience they could attract to a film's opening week, with good word of mouth supporting the film thereafter, but Willis did not have a built-in audience.[29] Willis featured prominently in the film's early marketing campaign, but it underwent several changes as the film's release date drew nearer.[21][29][66] Willis had developed a reputation as an "arrogant" actor concerned with his own fame. His refusal to address this, or speak about his personal life to the media, had reinforced this perception. For his part, Willis said that he wanted the media to focus on his acting.[31][67] There were reports that cinema audiences would moan at Willis's appearance in Die Hard trailers, and that a representative from an unnamed theater chain had pulled the trailer in response.[66] Research by several film studios revealed that audiences had a negative opinion of Willis overall and little or no interest in seeing him in Die Hard.[29] Newsweek's David Ansen called Willis "the most unpopular actor ever to get $5 million for making a movie".[17] As 20th Century Fox's confidence in Willis's appeal faltered, the film's posters were changed to focus on Nakatomi Plaza, with Willis's name billed in tiny print.[21][66] Willis's image was not included in the film's first full-page newspaper advertisement in mid-July.[29] 20th Century Fox executive Tom Sherak denied that Willis was being hidden, saying their marketing strategy had changed when they realized that the building was as important a character as the actor.[66] Defying expectations, sneak previews of the film were well received by audiences,[29] and the week following its release, the advertising began featuring Willis more prominently.[29] Despite his dislike of interviews, Willis appeared on several daytime shows to promote the film. Explaining why he was more involved in the promotion for Die Hard, Willis said, "I'm so excited about this film... To me, it represents why I wanted to be an actor."[31][66] Die Hard's premiere took place on July 12, 1988, at the Avco theater in Los Angeles, California.[68] In North America, the film received a limited release in 21 theaters in 13 cities on July 15, 1988, earning $601,851—an average of $28,659 per theater.[69] It was considered a successful debut with a high per-theater average gross.[70] The Los Angeles Times said that the late change in advertising focus and diminishing popularity for action films should have worked against Die Hard. Instead, positive reviews and the limited release had made it a "must-see" film.[71] It received a wide release the following week on July 22, 1988, across 1,276 theaters, and earning $7.1 million—an average of $5,569 per theater. The film finished as the number three film of the weekend, behind Coming to America ($8.8 million)—in its fourth week of release—and Who Framed Roger Rabbit ($8.9 million), in its fifth.[72] The film fell to number four in its third week with a further gross of $6.1 million, just behind Coming to America ($6.4 million), Who Framed Roger Rabbit ($6.5 million) and the debuting romantic comedy Cocktail ($11.7 million).[73] In its fourth weekend, it rebounded to the number three position with $5.7 million.[74] While the film never claimed the number-one box office ranking, it spent ten straight weeks among the top five highest-grossing films.[17][74] In total, the film earned an approximate box office gross of between $81.3 million and $83 million.[75][76] This made it the seventh-highest-grossing film of 1988, behind Crocodile Dundee II ($109.3 million), buddy comedy Twins ($111.9 million), fantasy-comedy Big ($114.9 million), Coming to America ($128.1 million), Who Framed Roger Rabbit ($154.1 million) and comedy-drama Rain Man ($172.8 million).[77] Outside North America, Die Hard is estimated to have earned $57.7 million, giving it an approximate cumulative gross of between $139.1 million and $140.7 million. [75][76][d] This figure makes it the tenth-highest-grossing film worldwide of 1988 behind Big ($151 million), Cocktail ($171 million), A Fish Called Wanda ($177 million), Rambo III ($189 million), Twins ($216 million), Crocodile Dundee II ($239 million), Coming to America ($288 million), Who Framed Roger Rabbit ($329 million) and Rain Man ($354 million).[76][78][79][e] The summer of 1988 saw box office grosses totaling $1.7 billion, breaking the previous year's record-breaking summer by $100 million,[65] and it was the most successful summer since 1984, when only three films earned more than $100 million in North America.[80] Defying pre-release expectations Die Hard was considered an enormous success.[12][80] In a year otherwise dominated by comedy films, Die Hard's overperformance was an anomaly compared to other action films such as Rambo III and Red Heat, which failed to meet box office expectations.[15][81] Film critic Sheila Benson believed this demonstrated a generational shift in audiences and their tastes; in particular, 25- to 37-year-old men had turned against alcohol abuse, sexism, and mindless machismo.[82] Along with films like Big and Young Guns (1988), Die Hard is credited with revitalizing 20th Century Fox, which had had few successes in preceding years. It also showed the action genre was not "dead".[65] Initial critical reviews of Die Hard were mixed.[43] Audiences reacted more positively; polls by the market research firm CinemaScore found that audiences gave it an average rating of "A+" on an A+ to F scale.[83] McTiernan's direction was praised.[2][84][85] In the Chicago Tribune, Dave Kehr wrote that McTiernan's "logical" direction created a sense of scale in the film that made it seem more significant than its content.[84] The scene in which the terrorists take over the building was described as a "textbook study" by Kevin Thomas, providing a strong introduction to both McTiernan's abilities and De Bont's cinematography.[2] De Govia's set design was complimented by Kehr as "ingenious".[84] Ebert praised the stunts and special effects.[86] Critics were conflicted over Willis's performance.[5][84][87] Many considered Die Hard Willis's breakout role, reviving his faltering transition from television to film star, and demonstrating his leading-man status and comedic range.[2][5][88] Kathy Huffhines and James Mills considered Willis's performance an evolution of his Moonlighting character David Addison with less sexism and more masculinity. Huffhines wrote that the performance improved as Willis hewed closer to his own working-class background.[89][90][91] Reviewers including Terry Lawson and Paul Willistein believed that despite expectations, Willis had been well cast, bringing a necessary vulnerability and sense of humor to a contemporary hero; one who displays remorse, fear, and indecision without being overly macho or comedic, and delivers dialogue that other action stars could not.[92] Marke Andrews argued that this vulnerability was essential to creating tension because audiences care about the character's fate.[93] Some reviewers felt that Willis's strongest talent—his comedic ability—had been woefully underutilized.[87][94] Writing for The Washington Post, Hal Hinson complimented Willis's "grace and physical bravado" that allowed him to stand alongside the likes of Stallone and Schwarzenegger. Conversely Vincent Canby said he lacked "toughness".[85][87] Reviewers generally agreed that Willis's dramatic acting was unimpressive or limited; Jay Boyar believed his abilities were perfect for McClane, although Kehr criticized him as only a television-level star.[84][95][96] Richard Schickel said Willis's performance was "whiny and self-involved", and that removing his undershirt by the film's denouement was the totality of his acting range. He acknowledged it was difficult to perform when acting only against special effects.[97] Rickman's performance was praised.[f] Caryn James said he was the film's best feature, portraying "the perfect snake",[3] and Hinson likened his work to the "sneering", malevolent performance by Laurence Olivier in Richard III (1955).[87] Kehr called Gruber a classic villain who combined the silliness of actor Claude Rains and the "smiling dementia" of actor George Macready.[84] Canby said that Rickman provided the only credible performance, and Roger Ebert—who was otherwise critical of the film—singled it out for praise.[86] Critics routinely praised Bedelia's performance and lamented that she was underused, in favor of McClane's and Powell's relationship.[g] Schickel highlighted a scene in which McClane confesses his sins to Powell before rescuing his wife, robbing their marital reunion of meaning.[97] Ebert and Schickel both felt that only McClane's and Powell's characters were developed.[87][97] The film's success was credited to the remote relationships built between Willis, Rickman, and Veljohnson, by Mike Cidoni.[91] Huffhines and Mills credited the performances with anchoring the film.[89][100][90] Ebert focused his criticism on the police captain (portrayed by Gleason), citing the character as an example of a "willfully useless and dumb" obstruction that wasted screen time and weakened the plot.[86] Thomas commended the casting of several minority actors.[2] The action and violence were criticized by many reviewers.[h] Kevin Thomas said the film had plot holes and lacked credibility. He believed it was the result of a calculated effort to please the broadest possible audience, and concluded that it had squandered its potential as an intelligent thriller for "numbing" violence and carnage.[2] Canby offered a similar sentiment, suggesting the film would appeal only to audiences that required a constant stream of explosions and loud noises. He described it as a "nearly perfect movie for our time", designed to appeal to audiences Canby described as "kidults"—adults with the mindset of children.[85] One violent scene, in which Powell saves McClane by shooting Karl, was singled out. Schickel believed it to be a cynical scene that undermined the humanity formed between McClane and Powell, by having Powell find redemption for his own mistakes through violence. Hinson believed the audience was deliberately manipulated into cheering for the act.[2][87][97] Writing for The New York Times, James said the film offered fun escapism while relying on action clichés, but Hinson countered that despite the relentless thrills, the film was not enjoyable.[87] Reviews identified allusions in Die Hard to films such as The Towering Inferno and The Poseidon Adventure (1972), Alien (1979), Aliens, and RoboCop (1987).[i] Kehr said Die Hard emulated Alien and RoboCop by developing a humorous and sentimental design that perfected the action genre, but in doing so it lacked a personality of its own.[84] Writing for the Poughkeepsie Journal, Cidoni felt Die Hard made previous action blockbusters such as Predator, Missing in Action (1984), and Rambo look like "tupperware parties".[91] Die Hard was one of several 1988 films labeled "morally objectionable" by the Roman Catholic Church, along with The Last Temptation of Christ, Bull Durham and A Fish Called Wanda.[101] Robert Davi saw the film with Schwarzenegger; Schwarzenegger was positive, but did not like Davi's character narrative, saying, "You were heroic! And now you've turned into an idiot!"[47] Bruce Willis in 1989 at the 61st Academy Awards At the 1989 Academy Awards, Die Hard was nominated for Best Film Editing for Frank J. Urioste and John F. Link; Best Visual Effects for Richard Edlund, Al DiSarro, Brent Boates and Thaine Morris; Best Sound Effects Editing for Stephen Hunter Flick and Richard Shorr; and Best Sound for Don J. Bassman, Kevin F. Cleary, Richard Overton and Al Overton Jr.[102] Michael Kamen won a BMI TV/Film Music Award for his work on the score.[103] Die Hard was released on Video Home System (VHS) cassette in January 1989.[104] It was a popular rental, debuting as the third-most rented film on the early February rental charts, rising to number one the following week.[105][106][107][108] It spent six of its first seven weeks in release at number one until it was replaced by A Fish Called Wanda at the end of March.[105][109] By 1997, it was estimated to have earned $36 million from rentals.[110] Die Hard was released on DVD in 1999 as part of a collection with its sequels Die Hard 2 (1990) and Die Hard with a Vengeance (1995).[111][112] It was released separately as a special edition DVD in 2001, including commentary by McTiernan, De Govia, and Edlund, and deleted scenes, trailers and behind-the-scenes images.[113][114] It was released on Blu-ray in 2007.[115] Die Hard: The Nakatomi Plaza Collection was released in 2015, collecting all five Die Hard films on Blu-ray in a container shaped like Nakatomi Plaza.[116] For its 30th anniversary in 2018, a remastered 4K resolution version was released on Ultra HD Blu-ray; the set also includes a standard Blu-ray and digital download. A limited-edition SteelBook case version was also released.[117] See also: Die Hard video games Die Hard merchandise includes clothing, Funko Pops, coloring and activity books, crockery, Christmas jumpers and ornaments, and an illustrated Christmas book retelling the film.[118] A third-person shooter video game, Die Hard, was released in 1989 for the Commodore 64 and Windows. Different top-down shooter versions were released for the TurboGrafx-16 and the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). The TurboGrafx-16 edition begins with McClane fighting terrorists in a jungle; the NES version offers a "foot meter" that slows McClane's movements after he repeatedly steps on shattered glass.[119][120] Die Hard Trilogy (1996), a popular game for the PlayStation, adapted the first three Die Hard films.[121][122] In 1997, the Japanese arcade game Dynamite Deka was redesigned and released in western territories as Die Hard Arcade. Players choose either McClane or secondary character Chris Thompsen to battle through Nakatomi Plaza, defeat terrorists led by White Fang, and rescue the President's daughter.[119][123] Two first-person shooters were released in 2002: Die Hard: Nakatomi Plaza, which recreates the events of Die Hard, and Die Hard: Vendetta, which serves as a narrative sequel to the film, pitting McClane against Gruber's son Piet.[119][121][123] Die Hard: The Ultimate Visual History—a book chronicling the development of the Die Hard film series—was released in 2018 to coincide with the film's 30th anniversary.[124] A board game based on the film was released in 2019. Developed by USAopoly, Die Hard: The Nakatomi Heist casts up to four players as McClane, Gruber, and his terrorists, each vying to complete their opposing tasks.[125][126] An 1812 painting by Joseph-Ferdinand Lancrenon [fr] of Odysseus, aided by Telemachus, preparing to slaughter his wife's suitors. Alexander Boon compared Odysseus's tale to John McClane's quest to rescue his wife from the terrorists. Die Hard has been described by critics such as Richard Brody and Chris Hewitt as a story about obtaining redemption through violence. McClane comes to Los Angeles to save his marriage, but makes the same mistakes that drove Holly away; Brody and Hewitt suggest that it is only after McClane defeats the terrorists through violence that their marriage is seemingly reconciled.[4][18] Similarly, Powell is haunted after accidentally shooting a child and finds redemption by drawing his gun to shoot Karl.[4] Several male characters who are driven by rage or ego suffer for it including the FBI agents, Karl, Ellis, and McClane who nearly loses Holly by showing off after shooting Gruber. Ebert notes the more even-tempered characters—often African American—fare better.[15] McClane identifies himself as a Roman Catholic, a religion requiring penance to earn redemption. Brody said that McClane endures physical punishment, including his feet being cut by glass shards to create bloody "stigmata". In making these sacrifices, he salvages his family. In this sense, McClane can be seen as a modern, working-class Christ-like figure.[4] Alexander Boon compares McClane violently reclaiming his wife to the Greek figure Odysseus slaughtering his wife's suitors. McClane is rewarded for his masculinity, despite demonstrating negative male traits.[127] Jeffrey Brown believed McClane's undershirt emphasizes his masculine physical form. This outfit is worn by other action characters like Rambo, and female characters displaying masculine traits such as Rachel McLish (Aces: Iron Eagle III) and Linda Hamilton (Terminator 2: Judgment Day).[128] Powell and Argyle are not McClane's physical equals but they prioritize relationships, and when called on to act, they succeed.[129] McClane possesses an imposing physicality but is clumsy and reliant on improvisation, and succeeds only because of the relationships with his allies.[129] It is McClane and Powell's relationship that is particularly instrumental to McClane's success. The pair share a non-romantic intimacy that enables McClane to confess his failings as a husband in a way he did not with Holly, allowing McClane to grow as a person.[130][131][132] Gruber fails because he is isolated, self-interested, and sacrifices his team for his own survival.[131] Peter Parshall observed that McClane and Gruber are reflections of each other.[131] Brody contrasts McClane—an all-American stereotype compared to Western cowboy stars like Roy Rogers, John Wayne and Gary Cooper—to Gruber, a classically educated, European villain who refers to America as a "bankrupt" culture.[4][18] Elizabeth Abele wrote that when compared to the superheroes of the previous decade in films like Superman (1978) and Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981), McClane is portrayed as physically but realistically masculine, conveying the idea of a "real man" who possesses independent, intrinsic strength.[133] According to Justin Chang and Mark Olsen, this can be seen as a response to Reaganism—the political positions of United States president Ronald Reagan—promoting values of the American dream, self-reliance, initiative, and technological advancement.[134][135] Willis believes that if given the choice, McClane would pass the responsibility of dealing with the terrorists onto anyone else, but he is ultimately compelled to serve as a reluctant hero.[12] When the character is introduced, he is wearing his wedding ring. Scott Tobias wrote this serves as a symbol of his marital commitment. Holly is presented as the opposite; she uses her maiden name and is not wearing her wedding ring. Instead, she is gifted a Rolex watch by her employers, serving as a symbol of her commitment to her job and the division in her marriage. When McClane unclasps the watch at the film's end to free Holly from Gruber's grasp, the totem of their separation is broken, and they appear to have reconciled.[132][136] Parshall describes the negative portrayals of female characters in Die Hard. They appear sexualized in pin-up posters, suggest drinking while pregnant, or are away from their families on Christmas Eve at a work function. Holly takes a position of authority following her boss's death, but that power is delegated to her by Gruber, and it is used in traditionally feminine ways, to care for her colleagues. Takagi is replaced in Holly's life with a different dominant male, McClane.[131] Darin Payne wrote that Die Hard reflects the contemporary decline of men as the main household earner as more women joined the workforce and blue-collar jobs were being lost to foreign countries. In response, an American cowboy saves the day, rescuing his captured wife from a foreign-owned tower.[137] Die Hard has elements that are anti-government, anti-bureaucracy and anti-corporation.[4][18][13] A terrorist asserts McClane cannot harm him because there are rules for policemen, rules he intends to exploit. McClane responds "so my captain keeps telling me", suggesting that he operates outside of bureaucratically approved procedures.[4][13] Brody wrote that the police often present a bigger obstacle than the terrorists. They believe they are in control of events, unaware the terrorists have already anticipated their every action.[4] The police chief is portrayed as incompetent, and the FBI is shown to be indifferent to the lives of the hostages as long as they kill the terrorists.[4][138] McClane is an everyman fighting against terrorists who are dressed like elite big-city workers.[18] As Ellis states, the only difference between the corporate employees and the terrorists is that he uses a pen and Gruber uses a gun.[131] The police, the FBI, and an intrusive journalist are each punished for standing in McClane's way.[18] Parshall noted the Christmas setting can be seen as an attack on traditional societal values. The corporation hosts a party on Christmas Eve, keeping employees away from their families, and the villains cynically appropriate Christmas iconographies. By defeating them, McClane upholds tradition and defends society.[131] Alongside the mainly German group of terrorists, Nakatomi Plaza is owned by a Japanese corporation, and the hostages are American.[4][137][139] Brody identified this as reflecting American anxieties about foreign powers at a time when Japanese technology firms threatened to dominate the American technology industry.[4][135][137] When McClane prevails, the suggestion is that American ingenuity will prevail.[139] America's old enemies, Germany and Japan, are portrayed as having forsaken their integrity in the pursuit of financial gain.[85] Dave Kehr said the film embodies a resentful 1980s "blue-collar rage" against feminists, yuppies, the media, the authorities and foreign nationals.[84] Brody notes that the film can also be considered progressive in its portrayal of its African American characters, as cast members VelJohnson, Gilyard, and White are featured in prominent and important roles.[4] The A.V. Club noted that unlike many other 1980s films, Die Hard is not an allegory for the Vietnam War. The film mocks the idea when one FBI agent remarks that their helicopter assault is reminiscent of the war; his partner responds that at the time he was only in middle school.[140] Even so, Empire believed the film references Vietnam by showcasing an ill-equipped local taking on highly equipped foreign invaders; this time America wins.[18] Drew Ayers described the complex layout of Nakatomi Plaza as analogous to the concealing jungles of Vietnam.[141] The entrance of the Fox Studio Lot in Century City, where a giant mural of John McClane crawling through a vent was erected as part of the film's 25th-anniversary celebration in 2013 Before Die Hard's release, Hollywood action films often starred muscle-bound men like Schwarzenegger and Stallone, who portrayed invincible, infallible, catchphrase-spouting heroes in unrealistic settings. Willis's portrayal of John McClane redefined the action genre, presenting a normal person with an average physique completely counter to that archetype. He is failing, both personally and professionally, and serves as a vulnerable, identifiable hero who openly sobs, admits his fear of death, and sustains lasting damage. Importantly, his one-liners do not come from a place of superiority over his foes, but as a nervous reaction to the extreme situation in which he finds himself, which he is only able to overcome through enduring suffering and using his own initiative.[12][18][20][140] Similarly, Rickman's portrayal of Gruber redefined action villains who had previously been bland figures or eccentric madmen. Gruber ushered in the clever nemesis; he is an educated, intelligent villain, who serves as the antithesis of the hero.[18] He has been referred to as one of the most iconic villains in the genre.[140] Empire magazine called Gruber one of the finest villains since Darth Vader. Rickman described the role as a "huge event" in his life.[18] Though other more typical 1980s-style action films were released, the genre gradually shifted to a focus on smaller, more confined settings, everyman heroes, and charming villains with competent plans.[140] Die Hard raised Willis from television stardom to worldwide recognition and brought fame to Rickman.[12] Willis's salary was seen as the peak of the 1980s bidding wars between new and old managers vying for jobs. The New York Times described it as the salary equivalent of an "earthquake" and MGM/UA chairman Alan Ladd Jr. said that it threw "the business out of whack ... like everybody else in town, I was stunned." It was seen as the most substantial change to salaries since Dustin Hoffman was paid $5.5 million to star in Tootsie (1982) at a time when top salaries ranged from $2 million–$3 million. It was expected that salaries for major stars would increase significantly to ensure they were paid more than a newer star like Willis.[16][142] McTiernan transitioned his success into directing an adaptation of one of his favorite novels, The Hunt for Red October (1990).[143] VelJohnson's performance resulted in his casting in the 1989–1998 sitcom Family Matters.[34] In 2017, Die Hard was selected by the United States Library of Congress to be preserved in the National Film Registry for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".[144][145] In July 2007, Bruce Willis donated the undershirt worn in the film to the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution.[146] The blood and sweat-stained shirt is considered iconic, an emblem of McClane's difference from archetypal, invincible heroes.[12] Fox Plaza has become a popular tourist attraction, although the building itself cannot be toured.[45] A floor used for filming became Ronald Reagan's office. When his head of staff toured the under-construction area, it was littered with broken glass and cartridge cases.[147] A giant mural depicting McClane's crawl through a Nakatomi Plaza vent was erected at the Fox Studio lot in Century City to celebrate the film's 25th anniversary in 2013.[148] One of the most influential films of the 1980s, Die Hard served as the blueprint for action films that came after, especially throughout the 1990s.[136] The term "Die Hard on/in a..." has become shorthand to describe a lone, everyman hero who must overcome an overwhelming opposing force in a relatively small and confined location.[12][136] Examples include: Under Siege (1992, "Die Hard on a battleship"); Cliffhanger (1993, "Die Hard on a mountain"); Speed (1994, "Die Hard on a bus"); and Con Air or Air Force One (1997, "Die Hard on a plane").[12][136][140] Willis himself recalled being pitched a film that was "Die Hard in a skyscraper". He said he was sure it had already been done.[12] It was not until the 1996 action-thriller film The Rock ("Die Hard on Alcatraz Island"), that the tone of action films changed significantly, and the increasing use of CGI effects allowed films to move beyond the limitations of real locations and practical stunts. Writing for The Guardian in 2018, Scott Tobias observed that none of these later films readily captured the complete effectiveness of the Die Hard story. [136] The film has been a source of inspiration for filmmakers including: Lexi Alexander, Darren Aronofsky, Brad Bird, Joe Carnahan, Gareth Evans, Barry Jenkins, Joe Lynch, Paul Scheer, Brian Taylor, Dan Trachtenberg, Colin Trevorrow, and Paul W. S. Anderson.[149][150][151] During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was among the action films director James Gunn recommended people watch.[152] The film's popularity has seen it referenced across a wide variety of media, including TV shows, films; video games; music; and novels. It has even been referenced in media targeted at children.[148][153] Willis cameos as McClane in the 1993 parody film Loaded Weapon 1.[154] There has been much debate over whether Die Hard is a Christmas film. Those in favor argue that the Christmas setting is sufficient to qualify it as a Christmas film. Those opposed argue that it is an action film whose events happen to take place at Christmas.[155][156] A 2017 YouGov poll of over 5,000 British citizens determined that only 31% believed that Die Hard is a Christmas film; those who did skewed under the age of 24, while those opposed were mainly over 50.[157][158] A similar 2018 Morning Consult poll of 2,200 American citizens determined that only 25% supported its status as a Christmas film. Those aged between 30 and 44, who were young during the peak of the film's popularity, were most in favor.[159] De Souza and Stuart support it being a Christmas film, while Willis feels it is not.[23][160][161][162] On the film's 30th anniversary in 2018, 20th Century Fox stated that it was "the greatest Christmas story ever told", releasing a re-edited Die Hard trailer that portrays it as a traditional Christmas film. According to De Souza, Silver predicted the film would be played at Christmastime for years.[162][163][164] Die Hard is now considered one of the greatest action films ever made.[165][166][167] On the film's 30th-anniversary in 2018, The Hollywood Reporter wrote that Die Hard was easily one of the most influential films in the action genre, whose influence could still be seen in contemporary films.[168] The Guardian and the British Film Institute regard it as the "quintessential" American action film, the latter calling it one of the ten greatest action films of all time.[169][136] Deadline Hollywood labeled it a staple of the action genre, that launched a "classic" franchise.[170] Writing for Vanity Fair, K. Austin Collins said that despite the number of times he had viewed the film, it remained a persistently satisfying and well-crafted piece.[13] It is listed in the 2003 film reference book 1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die, which says that the film "...effectively redefines the action movie as one-man-army."[171] A retrospective review by The A.V. Club said that Willis's everyman persona is key to the film's success.[140] Rickman said he believed it had continued to find fans decades after its release because it was delivered with wit and style.[12] Contemporary review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes offers a 94% approval rating from the aggregated reviews of 84 critics, with an average rating of 8.6/10. The consensus reads, "Its many imitators (and sequels) have never come close to matching the taut thrills of the definitive holiday action classic."[172] The film also has a score of 72 out of 100 on Metacritic based on 14 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.[173] Readers of Rolling Stone ranked it the number ten action film of all time in a 2015 poll,[174] while Empire readers voted it number 20 in 2017.[175] In 2001, the American Film Institute (AFI) ranked Die Hard number 39 on its 100 Years... 100 Thrills list recognizing the most "heart-pounding" films.[176] In 2008, Empire ranked it number 29 on its list of the 500 Greatest Movies of all Time.[165] In 2014, The Hollywood Reporter's entertainment industry-voted ranking named it the eighty-third-best film of all time.[177] The film's characters have also been recognized. In 2003, the AFI ranked Hans Gruber number 46 on its 100 Years... 100 Heroes and Villains list.[178] In 2006, Empire ranked McClane number 12 on its list of its '100 Greatest Movie Characters'; Gruber followed at number 17.[32][179] Several publications have listed it as one of the greatest action films of all time, including: number one by Empire,[180] IGN[166] and Entertainment Weekly;[167] number 10 by Time Out New York;[181] number 14 by The Guardian;[182] number 18 by Men's Health[183] and unranked by Complex,[184] Esquire[185] and Evening Standard.[186] Adding to the debate over Die Hard's status as a Christmas film, it has appeared on several lists of the top holiday films, including at number one by Empire[187] and San Francisco Gate,[188] number four by Entertainment Weekly[189] and The Hollywood Reporter,[190] number five by Digital Spy,[191] and number eight in a Radio Times readers' poll.[192] Main article: Die Hard (film series) Jeremy Irons (pictured 2015) portrayed Hans Gruber's brother Simon in 1995's Die Hard with a Vengeance. The success of Die Hard spawned four film sequels, beginning with Die Hard 2 in 1990, which was rushed into production to capitalize on the original's popularity.[140][193] Stuart and McTiernan did not return for the film; McTiernan was replaced by Renny Harlin.[193] Die Hard 2 is the last film in the series to feature the involvement of De Souza, Bedelia, VelJohnson, Atherton, Silver, and Gordon. Silver and Gordon fell out with each other and Willis after filming concluded, delaying the production of a third film—Die Hard with a Vengeance (1995).[193][194][195] This sequel also took longer to develop because of the difficulty in scripting an original scenario that had not already been used by one of Die Hard's many imitators.[193][195] McTiernan returned to direct Die Hard with a Vengeance; his only other film in the series.[140] The film's plot pits McClane against Hans Gruber's brother, Simon (Jeremy Irons).[193] Live Free or Die Hard—also known as Die Hard 4.0—was released in 2007. In it, McClane teams up with a hacker (Justin Long) to fight cyber terrorists led by Thomas Gabriel (Timothy Olyphant).[8][196] The film was controversial for its studio-mandate to target younger audiences, requiring much of the violence and profanity prevalent in the rest of the series to be excluded.[196] Even so, it was financially and critically successful.[197] The fifth film in the series, A Good Day to Die Hard (2013), teams McClane up with his son Jack for an adventure in Moscow. The film was considered a financial success.[197][198] It was derided by critics and fans, and the negative reception stalled the franchise. A Good Day to Die Hard is considered the weakest entry in the series.[8][196][199] Although Willis expressed interest in a sixth and final film, plans for a prequel film were cancelled following the acquisition of 21st Century Fox by Disney in 2019, and Willis retired from acting in 2022, after being diagnosed with aphasia, a condition which affects his ability to communicate.[193][200][201] Die Hard remains the most critically acclaimed film in the series based on aggregated reviews.[202] As the sequels progressed, they increasingly hewed closer to the 1980s-style action films Die Hard had eschewed, McClane becoming an invincible killing machine surviving damage that would have killed his original incarnation.[20][203] NPR called Die Hard a "genuinely great" movie whose legacy has been tarnished by lackluster sequels.[204] According to The Guardian, the evolution of the action genre can be tracked by the differences in each Die Hard sequel, as McClane evolves from human into a superhuman.[136] A comic book prequel and sequel have been released: Die Hard: Year One is set in 1976 and chronicles McClane as a rookie officer; A Million Ways to Die Hard is set 30 years after Die Hard, and features a retired McClane seeking out a serial killer.[205][206]

^ The $640 million in the vault is equivalent to $1.42 billion in 2023. ^ Attributed to multiple references:[12][27][40][41][42][43] ^ The 1988 budget of $25–$35 million is equivalent to $55.6 million–$77.8 million in 2023. ^ The 1988 box office of $139.1–$140.7 million is equivalent to $309 million–$313 million in 2023. ^ The Numbers and Box Office Mojo provide North American box office figures, but they do not include the international figures for many 1988 films. When failing to take into account the international grosses of some films, Die Hard is the eighth-highest-grossing film worldwide of 1988. Based on other industry reports in 1988 by Variety, the worldwide grosses of Cocktail and A Fish Called Wanda were greater than Die Hard's, lowering it to the tenth-highest-grossing film overall.[76][78][79] ^ Attributed to multiple references:[84][87][90][98] ^ Attributed to multiple references:[87][90][91][99] ^ Attributed to multiple references:[2][3][85][97] ^ Attributed to multiple references:[84][89][100][91]

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Die Hard at IMDb Die Hard at Rotten Tomatoes Die Hard at the TCM Movie Database Die Hard at the AFI Catalog of Feature Films Portals: 1980s Film United StatesDie Hard at Wikipedia's sister projects:Media from CommonsQuotations from WikiquoteData from Wikidata Retrieved from " 21982 film by Walter Hill For other uses, see 48 Hours. 48 Hrs.Theatrical release posterDirected byWalter HillWritten by Roger Spottiswoode Walter Hill Larry Gross Steven E. de Souza Produced by Lawrence Gordon Joel Silver Starring Nick Nolte Eddie Murphy Annette O'Toole CinematographyRic WaiteEdited by Freeman A. Davies Mark Warner Billy Weber Music byJames HornerProductioncompanyLawrence Gordon ProductionsDistributed byParamount PicturesRelease date December 8, 1982 (1982-12-08) (United States) Running time96 minutesCountryUnited StatesLanguageEnglishBudget$12 million[1]Box office$78.9 million[2] 48 Hrs. (pronounced 'forty-eight hours') is a 1982 American buddy cop action comedy film directed by Walter Hill, from a screenplay co-written with Larry Gross, Steven E. de Souza and Roger Spottiswoode. It stars Nick Nolte and Eddie Murphy (the latter in his film debut) as a cop and a convict, respectively, who team up to catch two hardened criminals. Titled after the amount of time the duo has to solve the crime, 48 Hrs. was Joel Silver's first title as a producer. Though predated by Richard Rush's 1974 film Freebie and the Bean, the film is often credited as being the first in the "buddy cop" genre, later popularized by films such as Lethal Weapon, Bad Boys, and Rush Hour. Its supporting cast features Annette O'Toole, James Remar, Frank McRae, David Patrick Kelly, Sonny Landham, Jonathan Banks and Brion James. The musical score was composed by James Horner. Released by Paramount Pictures on December 8, 1982, 48 Hrs. was one of the most commercially successful films of 1982,[3] received widespread acclaim from critics, and launched Murphy's film career by earning him a Golden Globe Award nomination for New Star of the Year – Actor. A sequel, Another 48 Hrs., was released in 1990, also directed by Walter Hill, with Nolte and Murphy reprising their roles. Convicted career criminal Albert Ganz (James Remar), with the help of his accomplice, Billy Bear (Sonny Landham), escapes from custody in a road gang -- a group of prison inmates working on a road, and watched by guards. They travel to San Francisco and kill Henry Wong (John Hauk), a former associate. Later, SFPD Inspector Jack Cates (Nick Nolte) meets up with Inspectors Algren (Jonathan Banks) and Van Zant (James Keane) at the Walden Hotel, where they've traced Ganz and Billy to -- Ganz and Billy had checked in under aliases. Ganz and Billy ambush them. In the ensuing shootout, Ganz kills Algren and Van Zant, and escapes with Billy, taking Jack's service revolver with him, and leaving Jack angry. Later armed with a replacement gun, Jack, wanting to make Ganz pay for killing Algren and Van Zant, tracks down Ganz's former partner-in-crime Reggie Hammond (Eddie Murphy), who is in prison with six months left on a three-year sentence for armed robbery. After a memorable first meeting in prison, Jack manages to get Reggie a 48-hour release into his custody so that Reggie can help Jack find Ganz and Billy. Reggie leads Jack to an apartment where Ganz and Billy's associate, Luther Kelly (David Patrick Kelly), lives. When Jack looks around, Luther fires a shot at him, and runs. Reggie stops Luther, who refuses to be interrogated, so Jack and Reggie take Luther to the police station, where Jack has Luther booked for carrying a concealed weapon and resisting arrest. That night, Reggie leads Jack to Torchy's, a redneck hangout where Billy used to be a bartender. Before they go in, Jack makes it clear that he thinks that there's something that Reggie is not telling him. Reggie, on a challenge from Jack, shakes the bar down, using Jack's badge, single-handedly bringing the crowd under his control. They get a lead on Billy's girlfriend Casey (Margot Rose), who lives in an apartment on top of a jewelry store in Chinatown with Ganz's girlfriend Sally (Denise Crosby). Jack and Reggie go to the apartment, but they get nothing out of Casey and Sally, and Casey says that she threw Billy out. Tensions between Reggie and Jack finally erupt into a fistfight in a garbage-filled alley, until it's stopped by a pair of patrol officers. Afterwards, Reggie finally admits to Jack that he, Ganz, Billy, Luther, and Henry had robbed a drug dealer of $500,000 a few years ago, and that the money was (and remains) stashed in the trunk of Reggie's Porsche in a downtown parking garage. Instead of splitting the cash, Ganz sold Reggie out, resulting in Reggie's incarceration. It's the reason why Ganz and Billy have taken Luther's girlfriend Rosalie hostage: they want Luther to go to the parking garage and get the money, in exchange for Rosalie's safe return. Ganz had Billy help him escape from the road gang so they could go after the money. On the next morning, Luther, who is out on bail, goes and gets the car, and Reggie and Jack tail him to a Muni station where Ganz comes to get the money. Luther, however, recognizes Jack, and Ganz and Billy escape after Billy kills a cop, while Reggie chases after Luther. Left with nothing, Jack ends up going back to the police station, where he speaks with Inspector Ben Kehoe (Brion James), and waits for Reggie to call. That night, after the phone call from Reggie, Jack goes to Vroman's, a nightclub in the Fillmore District, to find Reggie, who has bought a gun from an underground dealer, and Reggie has tracked Luther to a hotel across the street from Vroman's. Jack, humbled, apologizes for continuously berating and insulting Reggie. Jack lends Reggie some money to pay for a room at the hotel so he can have sex with Candy (Olivia Brown), a woman he met in Vroman's, but just as Reggie leaves the club with Candy, he sees Luther leave the hotel, and he alerts Jack. Luther gets in a stolen bus driven by Billy, and hands over the money to Ganz, who fatally shoots Luther (Rosalie's fate is left ambiguous). Ganz spots Jack and Reggie beside the bus in Jack's Cadillac DeVille Convertible, and a car chase/gunfight ensues, which ends when Billy forces Jack's Cadillac through the window of a Cadillac dealership's showroom. At this point, following a heated verbal thrashing from Jack's superior, Captain Haden, during which Jack defended Reggie from Haden's wrath, Jack and Reggie are ready to resign themselves to the fact that they failed to catch Ganz and Billy. At a local bar, Jack wonders if Billy and Ganz might go back to see Casey and Sally, and use their place as a hideout. Jack and Reggie go back to Casey and Sally's place, and force their way inside. Jack tells Casey that they know that she never threw Billy out, and that she and Sally were trying to protect Ganz and Billy. Reggie finds Billy in a bedroom, and aims a gun at him. Billy approaches Reggie with a large knife, but Reggie gets off two quick shots, killing Billy. That alerts Ganz to Jack and Reggie's presence. Ganz escapes into a maze of alleyways, with the satchel with the $500,000 in it, and Jack and Reggie follow him. Ganz captures Reggie. Jack approaches and shoots Ganz in the shoulder, throwing him away from Reggie. A furious Ganz, who can't believe that he got shot, stands up and charges at Jack, but Jack kills Ganz by shooting him six more times. Jack, driving Reggie's car, takes Reggie to see Candy at her apartment so he can have sex with her. When Reggie returns, Jack puts the satchel with the money in it back in the trunk of Reggie's car, but asks for a loan to buy a new car when Reggie is released, to which Reggie agrees. Jack gives Reggie a stern warning about changing his ways once he's released, telling Reggie that if he doesn't, then he'll put Reggie back in prison. Reggie agrees to change his ways, while half attempting to steal Jack's lighter. The two men share a laugh before Jack drives Reggie back to the prison. Nick Nolte as San Francisco Police Inspector Jack Cates Eddie Murphy as Reggie Hammond Annette O'Toole as Elaine Marshall Frank McRae as Captain Haden James Remar as Albert Ganz David Patrick Kelly as Luther Kelly Sonny Landham as Billy Bear Brion James as Inspector Ben Kehoe Kerry Sherman as Rosalie Jonathan Banks as Inspector Algren James Keane as Inspector Van Zant Tara King as Frizzy Greta Blackburn as Lisa Margot Rose as Casey Denise Crosby as Sally Olivia Brown as Candy Jack Thibeau as Inspector Lloyd Clare Nono as Ruth Sandy Martin as Officer Kramer Chris Mulkey as Officer Bellis John Hauk as Henry Wong Peter Jason as Torchy's Bartender John Dennis Johnston as Torchy's Patron Ola Ray as Vroman’s Dancer Lawrence Gordon came up with the original idea for the film.[4] The premise had the Governor of Louisiana's daughter kidnapped by a criminal, who strapped dynamite to her head and threatened to blow her up in 48 hours if the ransom was not met. The meanest cop goes to the worst prison in the state and gets out the most vicious criminal for his knowledge of the kidnapper who was his cellmate. Walter Hill says Gordon may have had the idea as far back as 1971 and a few writers worked on the project. In 1975 Gordon was making Hard Times with writer-director Walter Hill and editor Roger Spottiswoode. Spottiswoode wanted to direct and Hill suggested he break in by writing a script. He did a draft of 48 Hours supervised by Hill for Columbia Pictures, who had financed 48 Hours. Later Tracy Keenan Wynn worked on the script.[5] The film moved from Columbia to Paramount, which wanted to do a draft for Clint Eastwood. They hired Hill to rewrite the script with Eastwood as the criminal. He did so "but when I turned it in I said that I didn't think it would work," Hill said, adding "that the best idea would be to make Richard Pryor the criminal and have someone like Eastwood play the cop. Back in '78 or '79, no one seemed to think this was such a good idea."[5] Eastwood ended up playing a criminal in Escape from Alcatraz instead. As a result, 48 Hrs. went into limbo for two years. However, Gordon and his co-producer Joel Silver did not forget the project. Gordon called Hill and asked him if he would make the film with Nick Nolte as Cates.[4] "Paramount felt that the combination of Nick Nolte and a good black actor would be commercial," said Hill. "What happened is very simple: Richard Pryor is now an enormous movie star, and that's changed everybody's mind about black lead players." From the start, Hill envisioned a more improvisational film than he'd ever before created. "The story is a traditional urban thriller: two terrible guys are out there and have to be brought down," he said. "But even though I enjoy working in genres, the point is always to explode them or give them a transfusion. So I made a very conscious decision to go with the elements of personality of the two players, rather than be overly genuflective to the narrative. Thrusting a white policeman and a black convict together carries so much gravity that we didn't have to beat the white-black thing to death. If it works, it's because of the actors' personalities."[5] Hill's first choice after Richard Pryor was Gregory Hines. When he was not available, Hill's then-girlfriend Hildy Gottlieb recommended her client, Eddie Murphy, then best known for his work on Saturday Night Live.[6] The character of Reggie Hammond was originally named Willie Biggs, but Eddie Murphy felt that was too stereotypical of a black man's name and changed it to Reggie Hammond. Steven E. de Souza worked on the script for a few weeks after Eddie Murphy was cast. Critic Michael Sragow says "The producers recommended de Souza to Hill because they thought he'd be good at adding a light touch to the action. Hill didn't find de Souza fast enough or his style of comic writing appropriate to the movie; he thought the writer contributed gags instead of personality touches (very few of which were used), and he just didn't develop the rapport with de Souza that he'd later have with Gross."[5] Hill brought on Larry Gross to work on the script three weeks before shooting.[7] He told Gross "I've been working this fella and while I like em I know it's not gonna work out...." and called the film "a shaggy dog story. Defiant Ones plus chuckles."[8] Sragow says, "Hill has been known throughout his career for defining character through action rather than psychological banter, but he knew that this movie would be more of a character piece than a plot picture, and he wanted a writer who'd challenge his own habits and assumptions. Throughout filming, Hill joked that he waved the flag called 'myth and archetype'—trying to play off the folkloric expectations an audience might have for a big blonde hero like Nick Nolte-while Larry Gross waved a flag called 'social and psychological realism.' The writers' relationship became so symbiotic that Gross often found Hill coming down on the side of S&PR and Gross defending the prerogatives of M&A."[5] Gross says his main contributions were: the idea that Reggie Hammond wanted badly to have sex after three years in prison; Nick Nolte having a relationship with his girlfriend that mirrored the frustration Eddie was having; improving "the nuances of the relationships between Nick and his girl, his boss and the killers. The killers were sharpened up and made more interesting... Whenever Walter could invent a monologue for one of the women (all bit parts), he would." Gross thought Hill had received "a bum rap on the woman question." "One of the things I think makes 48 HRS. really more interesting than the average kind of movie like this," says its co-writer, "is that, although women play relatively small roles in the narrative, they kind of haunt everyone's imagination. The film really is sort of a screwball comedy about men and women trying to get together and not getting together, even though it is a very conventional gangster piece." "People had this perception of Walter being melancholy," Gross said. "And now that he's made this film no one thinks he's melancholy anymore."[9] Filming started on May 17, 1982, and ended on August 18, 1982.[10] The film was shot on-location in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Murphy started a few weeks after principal photography began because he was finishing up a season of Saturday Night Live.[4][11] The shoot went well but Hill ran into problems with studio executives. Michael Eisner, then head of Paramount, was worried that the film was not funny enough. Hill and his co-screenwriter, Larry Gross wrote more material tailored to Nolte's and Murphy's personalities. By Hill's account, they rewrote Murphy's character right to the very last day of shooting. Executives also found the footage of the gunfight in the hotel to be too violent and were worried that it would kill the film's humor. They told Hill that he would never work for Paramount again as a result.[4] Actor Chris Mulkey, said it was widely known on set that Paramount executives hated what they had seen of Murphy's performance in dailies and wanted to fire him, but Nolte and Hill fought to keep him. Mulkey remembered Murphy as a diligent performer who was open to suggestions and stuck to the script.[12] In 2008, co-writer Larry Gross's contemporaneous diary of his days on set was published on the MovieCityNews website.[7] In January 2011, Intrada Records released the world-premiere recording of James Horner's score and songs from the movie in a limited-edition run of 5,000 units.[13] This was the first official release of the score; previous pressings from Europe were unofficial bootlegs with music from other James Horner film scores.[14] No.TitleArtistLength1."Main Titles"James Horner5:132."Jack Leaves Elaine's Apartment"James Horner1:103."The Walden Hotel"James Horner4:144."Aerobics"James Horner4:125."Subway Station"James Horner5:436."Subway Chase"James Horner1:547."Luther's Blues"James Horner2:008."The Alley"James Horner5:239."The Boys Are Back in Town"The BusBoys2:4010."48 Hrs."The BusBoys3:1611."Love Songs Are for Crazies"The BusBoys3:4812."New Shoes"The BusBoys3:3413."Torchy's Boogie"Ira Newborn3:00 48 Hrs. opened in the United States on Wednesday, December 8, 1982, with its first weekend the same as The Toy and Airplane II: The Sequel and finished behind them in third place for the weekend with a gross of $4,369,868 from 850 screens,[15] and had a gross of $5,273,192 from its first 5 days.[16] The film grossed $78,868,508 overall at the U.S. and Canada box office,[17] surpassing their combined box-office, to become the seventh highest-grossing film of 1982.[3] This section needs expansion. You can help by adding to it. (November 2015) 48 Hrs. received critical acclaim and is considered by many as one of the best films of 1982.[18][19][20][21] On Rotten Tomatoes, the film has a 92% approval rating, based on 53 reviews, with an average rating of 7.4/10. The site's critical consensus reads, "Marking an auspicious feature film debut for Eddie Murphy, 48 Hrs. is a briskly paced action comedy that succeeds largely due to the outstanding chemistry between its two leads".[22] On Metacritic, the film has a score of 71 out of 100, based on 8 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.[23] In 2007, the staff at IGN named the movie the third-greatest buddy cop film.[24] Award Year Category Nominee Result Edgar Award 1983 Best Motion Picture Screenplay Walter Hill, Roger Spottiswoode, Larry Gross, Steven E. de Souza Nominated Festival du Film Policier de Cognac 1983 Grand Prix Walter Hill Won Golden Globe Award 1983 New Star of the Year – Actor Eddie Murphy Nominated Los Angeles Film Critics Association 1982 Best Music James Horner, The BusBoys (Gus Loundermon, Brian O'Neal, Kevin O'Neal) Won A sequel, Another 48 Hrs., was released in 1990. Walter Hill returned to direct, and Nolte, Murphy, James, and McRae all reprised their roles. The film was a box office success but received negative reviews. A Hindi-language Indian remake, Andar Baahar, was released in 1984, with Jackie Shroff and Anil Kapoor in the lead roles.[citation needed] A Kannada-language remake, Police File, was released in 1992.[citation needed] In 2017, the Safdie brothers announced they would helm a remake and co-write the script with Jerrod Carmichael.[25] In December 2019, the Safdies stated they reworked their script into a separate original idea.[26] As of 2025, the film has not been produced. ^ Box Office Information for 48 Hrs. Archived 2014-10-27 at the Wayback Machine The Wrap. Retrieved April 4, 2013. ^ "Box Office Information for 48 Hrs.". Box Office Mojo. IMDb. Retrieved January 17, 2012. ^ a b "1982 Domestic Grosses". Box Office Mojo. Retrieved June 20, 2010. ^ a b c d McGilligan, Patrick (June 2004). "Walter Hill: Last Man Standing". Film International. Archived from the original on 2018-06-22. 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"48 Hours Remake Got Scrapped and Now We Know Why [Exclusive]". MovieWeb. Retrieved January 11, 2020. Wikiquote has quotations related to 48 Hrs.. 48 Hrs. at IMDb Larry Gross' 48 Hrs. Diaries, Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4, Part 5, Part 6, Part 7, Part 8, Part 9, and Part 10 Portals: 1980s Film Retrieved from " 3 The following pages link to 48 Hrs. External tools (link count transclusion count sorted list) · See help page for transcluding these entries Showing 50 items. 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(links | edit) Shūichi Ikeda (links | edit) The Toy (1982 film) (links | edit) Beverly Hills Cop III (links | edit) The Warriors (film) (links | edit) Roger Spottiswoode (links | edit) Street Fighter (1994 film) (links | edit) Crossroads (1986 film) (links | edit) Tarō Ishida (links | edit) Freebie and the Bean (links | edit) Buddy film (links | edit) Noveltoons (links | edit) Church station (Muni Metro) (links | edit) List of Pennsylvania State University alumni (links | edit) View (previous 50 | next 50) (20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500) Retrieved from " WhatLinksHere/48_Hrs." When it hit theaters in July of 1988, "Die Hard" shocked the whole of Hollywood by becoming not just the unexpected hit of the summer, but one of the biggest hits of the year, and a legit star-making vehicle for a then little-known actor by the name of Bruce Willis. In the years since, "Die Hard" has been acknowledged a full-blown cinematic classic, with generation after movie-going generation giving over to both the salty charms of John McClane (Willis), and the film's beautifully over-the-top action.   It's worth remembering that "Die Hard" also inspired an unlikely franchise that's now a full five movies strong. The "Die Hard" Cinematic Universe may not be done yet, as Bruce Willis is reportedly hot to portray his most famous character at least one more time on the big screen (per EW). If you're looking to catch up with the wild, wacky, and perpetually life-threatening tales of John McClane ahead of that final chapter, this is the correct order in which to watch the entire "Die Hard" series. If you're wondering where to begin your quippy, action-packed "Die-Hard-a-thon," we can tell you the franchise features no prequels or spin-offs, so you can indeed start your journey at the very beginning and work your way through — and boy, should you, 'cause 1988's "Die Hard" is an action spectacular well worthy of its lofty cinematic legacy. For those who've haven't seen the film, it unfolds on Christmas Eve, and finds NYPD cop John McClane in Los Angeles attempting to reconcile a split with his wife, Holly (Bonnie Bedelia). Things take a turn for the insane when her company's Christmas party in a posh skyscraper is interrupted by armed men who take revelers hostage. Separated from the group, it's up to John to stop the bad guys from doing some very bad things. Equal parts survival thriller, character-driven hostage drama, and full-throttle action adventure fit with all the pomp and bombast you'd expect, "Die Hard" was a crowd-pleasing thrill ride that instantly became the gold standard for action movies upon release. Many fans believe it still holds that title. And yes, it happens to feature one of the great villainous performances in the history of moving pictures, with Alan Rickman's movie-stealing turn as the smarmy, over-confident Hans Gruber. John McTiernan directed the first "Die Hard," imbuing the film with a gritty realism that somehow grounded a patently unbelievable narrative. The plot for that film's 1990 sequel was every bit as absurd, by the way. Unfortunately, McTiernan didn't return for "Die Hard 2," and was replaced by '80s action auteur Renny Harlin, a filmmaker hardly known for reigning in cinematic absurdities. True to form, Harlin largely eschewed the grounding aspects of "Die Hard" in favor of unfettered bombast. Thankfully, the tonal shift didn't detract from the sequel's giddily ridiculous premise. Some might even argue the tonal acrobatics of "Die Hard 2" made it more fun than the original, with John and Holly having reconciled after the events of "Die Hard," only to find themselves at the center of another hostage situation two Christmases later. This time, a Special Forces unit holds Dulles International Airport (and several in-flight aircraft) hostage in exchange for the release of a South American drug lord, with the expected chaos ensuing. Boasting style, wit, and bluster in spades, "Die Hard 2" savvily continues and even builds upon the lore explored in the original, and it ranks as the one "Die Hard" movie to depict John and Holly as a loving, suitably-matched couple. Sadly, the good times did not last for John and Holly. When we pick up with John a few years after "Die Hard 2," Holly has once again given him the boot. Living in New York, John has pretty much bottomed out. Having been suspended from his NYPD gig, John has taken to drinking his way to the bottom of whatever bottle he can grab. That changes when a bomb goes off in a New York shop and the riddle-loving bomber, Simon, specifically requests to speak to him. Tasked with solving a series of puzzles to prevent more bombs from exploding, John sets off on a city-wide odyssey to prevent more carnage as he and a whip-smart Harlem shop owner named Zeus (Samuel L. Jackson) try to figure out Simon's endgame. That bomber (played with menacing gusto by Jeremy Irons) has a few ulterior motives of his own, not to mention some very specific ties to John's past, all of which eventually come to light. Along the way, the aptly-titled "Die Hard With a Vengeance" is bolstered by the crackling chemistry between Willis and Jackson, who've rarely been better in their storied careers. The film also benefits from the return of director John McTiernan, who came back with a vengeance himself, delivering the cleverest, grittiest, and most effortlessly entertaining "Die Hard" flick to date. People don't typically apply the term "jumped the shark" to feature film franchises, but if the "Die Hard" franchise had sharks, "Live Free or Die Hard" is undoubtedly the film that jumped them. In this case, the sharks are an F-35 fighter jet, and an absurd-by-any-standard set piece that finds John McClane more or less surfing the wing and bringing the plane down with little more than his wits. It's not only the most unbelievable moment that ever happened in the entire "Die Hard" franchise, and virtually undoes all of the gritty, grounded goodness John McTiernan brought to the third "Die Hard." Up until John's infamous wing-dancing shenanigans, "Live Free or Die Hard" is a fun if slight continuation of John's story that finds the aging, Holly-less NYPD detective tasked with rounding up a famed hacker (Justin Long) and getting him to Washington before cyber-terrorists bring the country to its knees. From there, a suitably Die-Hardy narrative unfolds that sees John outwitting and/or beating down all comers in hopes of once again saving the day. The film wisely finds a way to keep things personal for John too, with Mary Elizabeth Winstead turning up as his adult daughter Lucy, who naturally finds herself in the middle of the chaos. Look out for a brief appearance from Kevin Smith for a crossover you never knew you wanted. There's something to be said for walking away from a role before it becomes caricature. Even if "Live Free or Die Hard" wasn't the best film of the franchise, it would've made a solid-enough finale in the ongoing saga of John McClane that Bruce Willis could've left on a relative high note. Unfortunately, that saga continued a few years later with "A Good Day to Die Hard," which most critics and fans acknowledge it as a legit low-point for the franchise even if it does boast the series' best title. Set a few years after "Live Free," the latest "Die Hard" entry finds an older, wiser John jetting off to Russia to help out and hopefully reconnect with his estranged son, Jack (Jai Courtney). Once in the country, he learns Jack is actually an undercover CIA operative who's hardly in need of his famous Dad's help to stop yet another global terrorist conspiracy. Told with a wit that winks a little too often and featuring a plot that never ventures far from franchise staples, "A Good Day to Die Hard" is not a very good movie. It is, however, a decent-enough "Die Hard" movie that shamelessly feeds the hunger of franchise faithful still invested in John's cinematic journey. As a potential franchise closer, however, it's bound to leave even franchise diehards thinking the McClane saga deserved better. We'll have to see how "McClane" fares in production and wait until a proper finale. Sort byList orderList orderAlphabeticalIMDb ratingPopularityNumber of ratingsRelease dateRuntimeDate addedYou have no recently viewed pages

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