

# Wildlife

Cert 15 Denmark 2018 85 mins

## Crew

Director Paul Dano  
Screenplay Paul Dano  
Zoe Kazan  
Cinematography Diego García  
Film Editing Matt Hannam  
Louise Ford  
Original music David Lang



## Cast

Carey Mulligan Jeanette Brinson  
Jake Gyllenhaal Jerry Brinson  
Ed Oxenbould Joe Brinson  
Bill Camp Warren Miller  
Darryl Cox Clarence Snow  
Travis Bruyer the Forester

## Synopsis

*Montana, 1950s. The Brinsons - Jeanette, Jerry and their teenage son Joe - live in a small town close to the Canadian border, where Jerry works as a golf-pro.*

*Nearby, an uncontrolled forest fire rages, and when Jerry loses his job - and his sense of purpose - he decides to join the cause of fighting the fire, leaving his wife and son to fend for themselves. Suddenly forced into the role of an adult, Joe witnesses his mother's struggle as she tries to keep her head above water.*



## Booking Information

**Distributor:** Icon Home Entertainment  
**DVD bookings:** via **Filmbank**  
0207 984 5957/8  
info@filmbank.co.uk  
www.filmbank.co.uk  
or from **TROY FILM AGENCY**  
see inside front cover for details  
**Available:** March 2019

## Reviews

A sense of trepidation always hovers when a young actor announces their intention to chance their hand behind the camera rather than in front of it. If *Wildlife* is anything to go by, Paul Dano might be a case of an actor successfully transitioning to director without any trace of self-indulgence. His debut feature (which he adapted with wife Zoe Kazan from Richard Ford's 1990 novel of the same name) is an engrossing portrait of familial fracture in 1960s Montana, with a remarkable performance from the incomparable Carey Mulligan.

...Although the glacial pace of *Wildlife* might irk more impatient viewers and Joe himself fails to be as compelling a presence as either one of his parents, there's no doubting Mulligan and Gyllenhaal's magnetism. Dano soulfully captures the slow-motion moment at which a child realises their erstwhile infallible parents are actually flawed human beings, just like everyone else. It's certainly a sombre affair, but against the backdrop of a troubled post-war middle America in which desperate families scramble after the elusive American Dream, perhaps that's exactly what it needs to be.

**Hannah Woodhead, Little White Lies, November 2018**

...Dano composes all this beautifully. The atmosphere is elegiac as well as urgent, and the stunning, wide-open spaces of Montana make us feel the family's claustrophobia even more acutely. He also gives his actors room to breathe although, in Mulligan's instance, it's room to be mind-blowing. She delivers both quicksilver emotion and slow-burn resentment, sometimes simultaneously, which is quite a feat. Is Jeanette a doting wife and mother, in truth, or a hedonistic pleasure seeker? Mulligan makes you believe that she is both. Meanwhile, Oxenbould, with his soulful, almost middle-aged face, is also excellent, as is Gyllenhaal, who has the lesser role, but brings to Jerry the sympathy that is necessary. No one is either a hero or villain here. Even Miller can be charming at times.

The ending is more bittersweet than conclusive, but does indicate that Joe has found some agency, at last. This isn't just a cut above most films about unhappy families, it's a cut above most films, period.

**Deborah Ross, The Spectator, November 2018**

## Film Facts

- ★ The film premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival 2018, where it was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize
- ★ Pulitzer-prize winning author Richard Ford, who wrote the novel on which the film is based, encouraged Paul Dano to make the story his own, saying "My book's my book, and your picture's your picture."
- ★ Some of the filming took place in Oklahoma, because of concerns with the winter weather in Montana.

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