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Description

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Independence Day (also promoted as ID4) is a 1996 American science fiction action film directed by Roland Emmerich and written by Emmerich and Dean Devlin. It stars an ensemble cast that consists of Will Smith, Bill Pullman, Jeff Goldblum, Mary McDonnell, Judd Hirsch, Margaret Colin, Randy Quaid, Robert Loggia, James Rebhorn, and Harvey Fierstein. The film focuses on disparate groups of people who converge in the Nevada desert in the aftermath of a worldwide attack by a powerful extraterrestrial race. With the other people of the world, they launch a counterattack on July 4—Independence Day in the United States.

While promoting Stargate in Europe, Emmerich conceived the film while answering a question about his belief in the existence of alien life. Devlin and Emmerich decided to incorporate a large-scale attack having noticed that aliens in most invasion films travel long distances in outer space only to remain hidden when reaching Earth. Shooting began on July 28, 1995, in New York City, and the film was completed on October 8, 1995.

Considered a significant turning point in the history of the Hollywood blockbuster, Independence Day was at the forefront of the large-scale disaster film and sci-fi resurgence of the mid-late 1990s. It was released worldwide on July 3, 1996, but began showing on July 2 (the same day the film's story begins) in original release as a result of a high level of anticipation among moviegoers. The film received mixed reviews, with praise for the performances, musical score and visual effects, but criticism for its characters. It grossed over \$817.4 million worldwide, becoming the highest-grossing film of 1996 and the second-highest-grossing film ever at the time, behind Jurassic Park (1993). The film won the Academy Award for Best Visual Effects and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Sound.

The sequel, Independence Day: Resurgence, was released 20 years later on June 24, 2016, as part of a planned series of films.

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SYNOPSIS: On July 2, a giant alien mother ship, over 340 miles in diameter (550 km) enters orbit around Earth and deploys several dozen

saucer-shaped "destroyer" spacecraft, each 15 miles (24 km) across. The destroyers take positions over many of Earth's major cities, including New York, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and Moscow. David Levinson (Jeff Goldblum), an MIT graduate working on satellites for a cable company in New York City, discovers a signal hidden in satellite transmissions which he believes is a timer counting down to a coordinated attack by the aliens. With the help of his ex-wife Constance Spano (Margaret Colin), a White House staffer, David and his father Julius (Judd Hirsch) gain entrance to the Oval Office to warn President Thomas J. Whitmore (Bill Pullman) of the impending attack. There, David tells Whitmore that the alien visitors are using the Earth's satellite technology to coordinate their attack. The president immediately orders large-scale evacuations of the targeted U.S. cities, but the aliens attack with advanced directed energy weapons before the evacuations can be completed. The president, his young daughter, portions of his staff, Constance and the Levinsons narrowly escape aboard Air Force One as a destroyer lays waste to Washington D.C. New York City and Los Angeles are both destroyed in the same manner, leaving millions dead.

On July 3, the United States conducts a coordinated counterattack; the Black Knights, a squadron of Marine Corps F/A-18 Hornets from El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, participate in an assault on the destroyer that has devastated the city of Los Angeles. Their weapons fail to penetrate the craft's force field, and it responds by releasing scores of smaller "attacker" ships which are similarly shielded and armed with high-energy laser blasters. One-sided dogfights ensue and the F/A-18 squadrons are quickly destroyed. Captain Steven Hiller (Will Smith) manages to evade the guns of the attacker ships -- though his wingman, Jimmy Wilder is shot down -- and lures a single attacker to the Grand Canyon. There, as his jet is about out of fuel and the attacker is about to overtake him, he deploys the landing chute for his jet, covering the alien craft's window, temporarily disorienting the pilot. Captain Hiller ejects from his jet. The alien crashes into the top of the canyon wall and lands in the desert. Captain Hiller parachutes to a landing close by and angrily marches over to find and confront whatever life form is in the alien craft. The door to the alien fighter craft pops open and a very bizarre looking creature with tentacles appears. Captain Hiller delivers a right cross and knocks the creature out, saying "Welcome to Earth!!" He sits down and smokes a victory cigar.

On board Air Force One, President Whitmore consults his staff, who report that NORAD has been destroyed by the invaders and the Vice President, Whitmore's Cabinet and the Joint Chief have all perished in the attack. Arguing about how they should have issued an executive order to evacuate the major cities that were attacked, David's father suggests that the US government did know about the invaders, having stored some evidence of a previous visit at Area 51 in the Nevada desert. The president is humored and tries to tell Levinson that Area 51 doesn't exist, however, Whitmore's Defense Secretary, Nimziki (James Rebhorn), tells the president that the installation does exist.

As Hiller is using his parachute to drag the body of the alien across the desert, he is picked up by Russell Casse (Randy Quaid), a crop-duster pilot who is traveling across the desert with his kids and a group of refugees in a convoy of RVs. From there they take the captured alien to Area 51, commanded by Major Mitchell (Adam Baldwin). Area 51 conceals a top secret facility housing a repaired alien attacker ship and three dead alien bodies. The president arrives and is given a tour by Dr. Brackish Okun (Brent Spiner), the head scientist at the facility. Okun tells the group that the aliens' biochemistry is similar to our own, and they can breathe our air. They don't seem to use sound to communicate, however; the Area 51 staff believes they communicate telepathically. Attempts have been under way since the late 1960s to repair the attacker ship and with the arrival of the mother ship, the systems in the attacker have reactivated.

When Okun removes an outer biomechanical suit from the alien Hiller captured, the living being inside is revealed. The creature regains consciousness and kills most of the examining crew, and because it has no vocal cords, it makes use of Dr. Okun's voice to communicate with President Whitmore, who is outside the glass windows of the lab. Its first words are "Release me." President Whitmore poses a question to the alien, asking if the people of Earth and their invaders can live in peace. The creature says "No peace." When the president asks the creature what it wants them to do, it responds, "Die." It uses its telepathic powers to invade president's mind, which briefly incapacitates him. The military personnel shoot the alien through the glass, with Major Mitchell stepping through the broken glass and delivering a final head shot. Dr. Okun is left in a coma.

During the instant that President Whitmore was immobilized, he was able to read the thoughts of the alien and learned of their plan: they attack planets, kill off any indigenous life, use up the resources, then move on. "They're like locusts," he says. President Whitmore issues very clear orders to "nuke the bastards."

B-2 Spirit bombers are deployed, with the first destroyer targeted one that is hovering over a deserted Houston, TX. The weapon explodes, but proves ineffective at penetrating the craft's force field and destroys the city instead; as a result, the president orders the remaining bombers called back.

First Lady Marilyn Whitmore (Mary McDonnell) had been on a working trip to Los Angeles and got caught up in the destroyer attack there. Captain Hiller's exotic dancer girlfriend, Jasmine Dubrow (Vivica A. Fox), rescues Mrs. Whitmore when she comes across the wreckage of the helicopter the first lady had been attempting to escape in. Captain Hiller later finds Jasmine, her son Dylan, and the first lady camped out in the remains of El Toro MCAS and flies them in a helicopter to Area 51. A doctor tells the president that his wife has uncontrollable internal bleeding. When the President goes in to see her, he says, "The doctors say you're gonna be just fine." She smiles and responds softly, "Liar." She dies not long after that.

David Levinson is found by his father, drunk and furiously making a mess in the hanger, yelling about how the nuclear attack over Houston will only add to the destruction of Earth. Julius tries to comfort his son, telling him that he's been lax in his faith in Judaism since David's mother died. He tells David to get off the chilly floor so he won't "catch cold". David has an epiphany and wakes up a tech sleeping in the hanger.

David has everyone gather in the hanger and demonstrates to the crowd how the attacker ship's shield works. He then activates a program on his laptop, that deactivates the ship's shield, making it effortless for Major Mitchell to shoot a soda can he placed on it. David suggests a plan that involves using the newly operable alien attacker to gain access to the interior of the alien mother ship in space in order to introduce a computer virus that will disable the protective shields around the destroyers and attackers on Earth. Once the computer virus takes effect, the attackers and destroyers will be left vulnerable and a single nuclear weapon could be used to destroy the mothership. Hiller volunteers to pilot the attacker, with Levinson accompanying him to upload the virus to the mother ship.

Before the mission, Hiller and Jasmine take a few minutes to get married, with Dylan as ringbearer and David Levinson and Connie Spano as witnesses. David and Connie reconnect during the service and hold hands.

With satellite communications knocked out, the Americans must use Morse code to coordinate an attack with the remaining forces around the world, timed to occur when the invaders' shields are set to fail. Lacking enough military pilots to fly all available aircraft, the commanders call for volunteer pilots. Those who step up include President Whitmore and Russell Casse, who both have previous combat flight experience.

Hiller and Levinson reach the mother ship and implant the virus. President Whitmore leads the American jet fighters against the alien destroyer approaching Area 51. Although the aliens now lack shields, the squadron's supply of missiles is quickly exhausted against the colossal craft and its large complement of assault ships. The underside of the alien craft opens up as its directed energy weapon prepares to fire on the base. The president fires a missile at the cannon but it connects and explodes with a protective hatch. Just as the squadron is informed that all their missiles have been fired, Russell Casse radios in saying he has one final rocket. As he launches it, his firing mechanism jams; he decides to pilot his aircraft into the alien weapon in a kamikaze attack. The explosion causes a chain reaction which annihilates the ship. Human resistance forces around the world use the same weak point to destroy the remainder of the alien ships.

While still on the mother ship, Hiller is unable to disconnect from a docking clamp. Knowing they need to still fire the nuke, the two smoke cigars and thank each other for their efforts. They launch the nuke which penetrates a nearby control center. Hiller's ship is suddenly free and he furiously pilots it toward the portal they entered, narrowly escaping when the doors close. The bomb explodes, instantly destroying the mother ship. Hiller and Levinson are caught up in the shockwave and debris of the mother ship's explosion, but are able to return to Earth unharmed, crash-landing the alien fighter in the desert close to Area 51. When they emerge from the smoke and dust to join their waiting friends, they're both smoking cigars. The film ends as the everyone watches debris from the mother ship enter the atmosphere like shooting stars.