



*"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." —  
Dr. Jane Goodall*

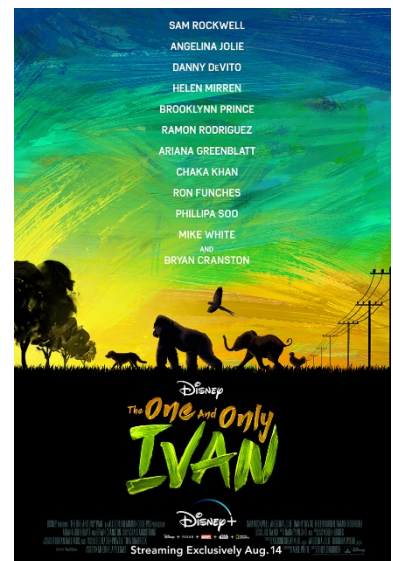
**A**n adaptation of the award-winning book about one very special gorilla, Disney's "The One and Only Ivan" is an unforgettable tale about the beauty of friendship, the power of visualization and the significance of the place one calls home.

The story follows Ivan, a 400-pound silverback gorilla, who shares a communal habitat in a suburban shopping mall with Stella the elephant, Bob the dog, and various other animals. Ivan has few memories of the jungle where he was born, but when a baby elephant named Ruby arrives, it touches something deep within him. Ivan begins to question his life, where he comes from and where he ultimately wants to be.

The heartwarming adventure, which comes to the screen in an impressive hybrid of live-action and CGI, is based on Katherine Applegate's bestselling book, which won numerous awards upon its publication in 2013, including the Newbery Medal.

The movie stars: Sam Rockwell as the voice of Ivan; Angelina Jolie as the voice of Stella; Danny DeVito as the voice of Bob the dog; Helen Mirren as the voice of Snickers the poodle; Brooklyn Prince as the voice of Ruby; Ramon Rodriguez as the mall employee George; Ariana Greenblatt as George's daughter Julia; Chaka Khan as the voice of Henrietta the chicken; Mike White as the voice of Frankie the seal; Ron Funches as the voice of Murphy the rabbit; Phillipa Soo as the voice of Thelma the macaw; and Bryan Cranston as Mack, the circus attraction's owner.

"The One and Only Ivan" is directed by Thea Sharrock from a screenplay by Mike White based on Applegate's book and is produced by the late Allison Shearmur, Angelina Jolie and Brigham Taylor. Sue Baden-Powell and Thea Sharrock serve as executive producers.



Filmmakers enlisted a roster of exceptional talent to help bring “The One and Only Ivan” to life, including director of photography Florian Ballhaus (“Allegiant,” “Men in Black”), production designer Molly Hughes (“The New Mutants,” “The Fault in Our Stars”), editor Barney Pilling, ACE (“Annihilation,” “The Grand Budapest Hotel”), costume designer Jill Taylor (“The Commuter,” “My Week with Marilyn”), and original score by Craig Armstrong (“Moulin Rouge!,” “The Great Gatsby”).

“The One and Only Ivan” debuts exclusively on Disney+ on August 21, 2020.

## FROM BOOK TO SCREEN

“The One and Only Ivan” was inspired by a true story about a real-life gorilla that lived for almost 27 years in a shopping mall in Tacoma, Washington, before being moved to a sanctuary. Author Katherine Applegate came across the story when it was featured in a New York Times article. “I still remember the headline,” says Applegate. “It read ‘a gorilla sulks in a Tacoma mall as his future is debated.’ And I was astounded that A, that there was a gorilla in a mall and B, that he’d been there for 27 years.”

Intrigued, Applegate researched the story then fictionalized it, changing the human characters and telling the story from Ivan’s point of view. Readers could ‘hear’ Ivan’s voice in his own words. The book turned into a bestseller and a beloved book, not just among young readers but older readers as well. “The One and Only Ivan” went on to win a Newbery Medal, and Disney acquired the film rights to the book.

Keeping the heart of the book and the emotional beats intact was an important issue for Disney when they began thinking about translating “The One and Only Ivan” to the screen. As producer Brigham Taylor says, “Preserving that emotion becomes the most important element. There’s fun to be had. There’s an adventure inside of that. And all that is very important as well as maintaining the voices of the characters and the important themes of the book. But to me, it distills down most importantly into the emotion you feel about pulling for this character to wind up where he should.”



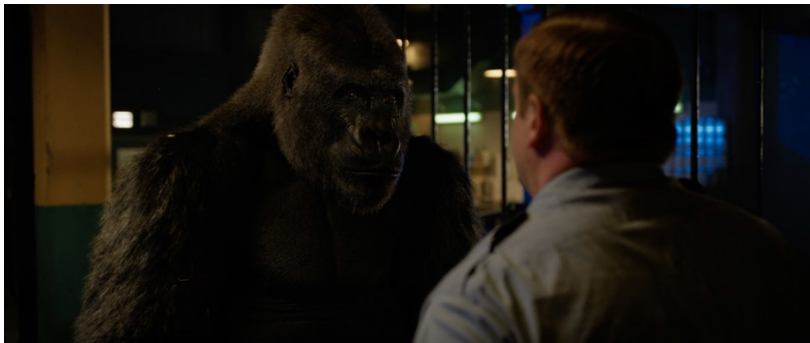
First up for the producing team was to find a director who could tackle the job with vision and creativity. A search led them to British director Thea Sharrock, an acclaimed theater director who made her feature-film directorial debut with “Me Before You.” Sharrock, drawn to the project by the book, says, “I read and loved the book. I’ve got kids of the right age for the book and it’s not often as a parent that you read a new book that you enjoy as much as they do. I realized there are certain profound messages that are shaped in such a way that adults

and children can enjoy them equally, just in a different way. The thing that I've never let go of is the fact that it's inspired by a true story. And I think ultimately at the heart that's what makes this story and this book and this film so unique and so special."

Offering an overview of the story, producer Angelina Jolie says, "The writer of the book expanded it into this beautiful story, written from Ivan's point of view, with his voice. She got into the mind of Ivan, and how humans see him, and what humans expect of animals. He speaks a lot about life, and some of the heavy things that need to be addressed. But expressed through an artistic, playful, loving gorilla, played by Sam Rockwell, somehow those life lessons come out easier and are digested in a different way. The story is very much about these animals and the man who runs the circus, Mack, played by the brilliant Bryan Cranston. It is their world, and their eventual journey to freedom.

## MEET IVAN AND HIS ANIMAL FRIENDS

**IVAN** is a 400-pound silverback gorilla who lives in a small enclosure at a circus attraction in a shopping mall. A gentle giant with a gruff exterior and a soft heart, Ivan is the show's main attraction. When a new baby elephant arrives, Ivan begins to reassess his life and finds a way to express himself—with an unexpected outcome.



Ivan is voiced by Academy Award®-winner Sam Rockwell ("Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri," "Vice") who says, "There are a few elements to Ivan that make him who he is. There's an optimism to him. And then there's a real dark quality to

him in that he has sort of post-traumatic stress from the jungle and seeing his father killed and his sister dying that gives the character a lot of potency."

**STELLA** is an older African elephant who has been in the circus for years and never been free. She is a calming, comforting presence to all the animals, and she loves Ivan.

Academy Award-winning actress Angelina Jolie ("Maleficent," "Changeling") voices Stella. Describing Stella, Jolie says, "Stella knows that she won't be around forever, and she's trying to think of what needs to be understood for the next generation. She watches a new, young elephant come in, Ruby. She's at that time in her life when she knows that she won't have long, but she hopes the little elephant will have a life very different from hers."

**BOB** is a scrappy, scruffy stray dog who calls the mall his home and befriends all the animals in the circus attraction. Bob loves to hang out with his best friend Ivan and watch TV.

Danny DeVito (“Dumbo,” “Jumanji: The Next Level”) voices Bob and says, “Bob’s a scruffy dog that comes around, and he and Ivan become friends. Bob is on his own. He can go anywhere he wants, but he prefers to stay there for a couple of reasons. First of all Ivan is the coolest guy. Second, Stella is the sweetest elephant you’ll ever want to meet. And there’s another good reason why he loves Ivan. Ivan has this big belly and he’s got this cage with a TV in there and Bob sleeps on Ivan’s belly. It’s the softest, biggest, most comfortable pad Bob’s ever had.”

**SNICKERS** is a beautiful, white poodle, always impeccably clean and groomed. Snickers is pampered and lives a life of luxury with the circus’ owner, Mack.

Academy Award–winner Helen Mirren (“The Queen,” “The Good Liar”) voices Snickers and comments, “Snickers has this sort of love-hate relationship with Bob. You want them to get together but, of course, they’re never going to get together. It’s never going to happen.”

**RUBY** is a delightful baby elephant who comes to join the circus at the mall. She immediately bonds with Stella and quickly endears herself to all of the other animals.

Brooklyn Prince (“The Florida Project,” “The Turning”) voices Stella, and has this to say about her: “Ruby is very inquisitive because she can ask like a hundred questions at the same time. She’s very cuddly. She’s very cute.”

**HENRIETTA** is a unique-looking, quirky chicken who tells it like it is.

Chaka Khan (“The Masked Singer,” “Empire”), who voices Henrietta, says that Henrietta is like an “alpha female chicken.” “We have a lot in common,” explains Khan. “Henrietta and I are both outspoken and speak our minds. We can cuss you out or nurture you. And I have those traits as well.”

**FRANKIE** (voiced by Mike White, who also wrote the screenplay) spends his days balancing a ball on the tip of his nose. As far as Frankie is concerned, that is his sole purpose in life.

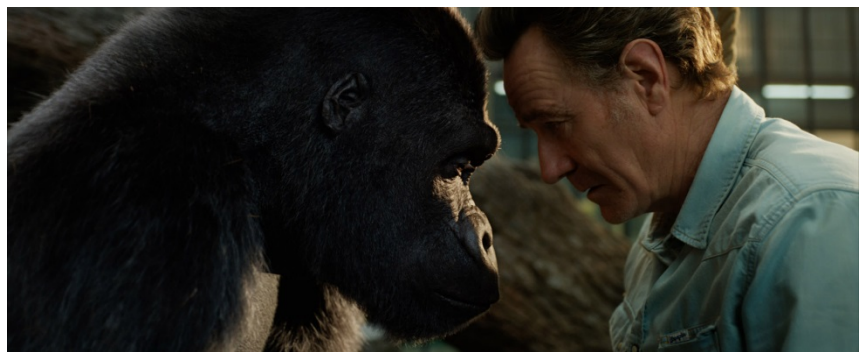
**MURPHY** (voiced by Ron Funches, “Trolls World Tour,” “Harley Quinn”) is a white rabbit whose job in the circus is to drive around in a little red fire truck and squirt people with a hose. Murphy and his truck are so inseparable that Murphy has forgotten how to be a rabbit.

**THELMA** (voiced by Phillipa Soo, “Hamilton,” “Moana”) is a macaw who likes to view the goings-on from her perch on Mack’s shoulder.

## MEET THE HUMANS IN IVAN’S LIFE

**MACK** is the owner of a circus show that operates from inside a shopping mall with Ivan as the headliner. Ivan has been with Mack since he was a baby, and they share an unusual bond. Once a thriving attraction, the circus is now falling out of favor and the dwindling attendance barely keeps the operation alive.

Multiple Emmy Award®-winner Bryan Cranston (“Breaking Bad,” “Trumbo”) plays Mack, who he describes as “a character who is trying to hold on.” “His wife left him over the disastrous decision to keep a baby gorilla in their



house,” explains Cranston. “There’s a sense of desperation to Mack. But he’s a showman and he pushes that away and rises to the occasion to put on the show with all that sense of theatricality and hope as the show must go on. There’s goodness to that and yet you can see through that and there’s a little bit of desperation and sadness to it.”

**GEORGE** is a kind and caring man who takes care of all the animals and is Mack’s right-hand man for the show. His wife is ill, so George often brings his daughter Julia to work with him.

Ramon Rodriguez (“Transformers” Revenge of the Fallen,” “Need for Speed”), who plays George, says of his character, “The thing that really appealed to me about my character George is he’s just a very everyday hardworking guy who is carrying a lot on his shoulders. He’s got a lot going on in his life. But you don’t ever really see him share that. Actually it’s the opposite. He’s always



lifting Mack up and really supporting Mack, and bringing in Julia and always spinning the positive for Julia so she never really feels the weight of what's happening in the world."

**JULIA**, *George's daughter, loves to sit by Ivan's cage and talk to him. A budding artist, Julia is always drawing and showing Ivan her work. She establishes an interesting bond with Ivan and encourages him to draw by giving him crayons and paper.*



Ariana Greenblatt ("Avengers: Infinity War," "Stuck in the Middle"), who plays the part of Julia, describes the relationship between Julia and Ivan: "Julia's relationship with Ivan is very special because Julia feels very lonely sometimes and so does Ivan. So they have this relationship that they talk to each other, even though Ivan can't really speak to her but in the eyes they can communicate."

## MAKING "THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN"

"The One and Only Ivan" is an impressive mix of live action and state-of-the-art CGI. Prior to the hybrid shoot, which is live action with cast and motion capture (mo-cap), there was a black box and mo-cap rehearsal shoot. Stand-in items were made for all of Ivan's hero props for the black box shoot, which took place two weeks before the hybrid shoot commenced.

The hybrid shoot took place across 33 days at Pinewood Studios, London. After the hybrid shoot ended, a virtual shoot took place, which took six weeks to complete.

Obviously, the process of making "the One and Only Ivan" was a complicated one! "It's really like making two movies at once," explains Thea Sharrock. "That is in a way the simplest way to describe it, in that the movie is pretty much fifty-fifty live action to



animation. In the full animation world, we have scenes that are purely animals speaking to each other. And in the live action world—or hybrid world—we have humans that interact with animals who behave as animals normally would. We shot the hybrid world in a way that is fairly normal in principle. But we had to replace all of our animals either with fantastic looking stuffies or physical performers.

Sharrock had a performer named Ben Bishop who was Ivan in all the scenes in which Ivan had to interact with any of the humans. Bishop worked with the director for four months in rehearsals so that he could understand physically and mentally how Ivan could embody his domain.

Throughout shooting, Bishop was in a mo-cap suit and had calipers so that he could physically resemble a gorilla as closely as possible. “Ben’s incredibly experienced both as an actor and as a ‘gorilla’ performer,” says the director. “He was the basis for Ivan’s physical performance in both the scenes with humans and the fully animated scenes. So, he would be there, both for the camera to get used to what a shot will look like with a gorilla in it, but also primarily for any of the other actors to play against.”

For the fully animated scenes, Bishop was surrounded by puppeteers, in order to find a physical outline of how the scenes with only animals would be blocked out. Filmmakers then replicated these scenes using fairly basic animation and then shot them using replica camera equipment, before the animators began the long and detailed process of bring the animals to life. “So in the end we had six weeks shooting all the scenes with humans, and six weeks shooting all the fully animated scenes,” concludes Sharrock.

For Ivan, a detailed, realistic, Ivan-reference head was designed by Animated Extras and used on set as a lighting reference. Ivan’s hammock, seen in his enclosure, was sourced and made by a primate enrichment charity in America.

During the development phase, drawings of Stella were printed to scale (9 ft. tall). She was made out of foam material and was quite light considering her size—about 88 lbs. Over 100 yards of Lycra were ordered for her skin in green and grey. There was also a large puppet version of Stella.



A full version of Bob, the stray dog, was created for lighting reference (known as a stuffie). It looked like taxidermy, as it was so realistic.

White fur was sourced for the poodle, Snickers, and the stuffie for lighting reference had 8 differing haircuts to get to the final look. Fun fact: Snickers’ hairdryer was a real 1990s model, sourced by production.

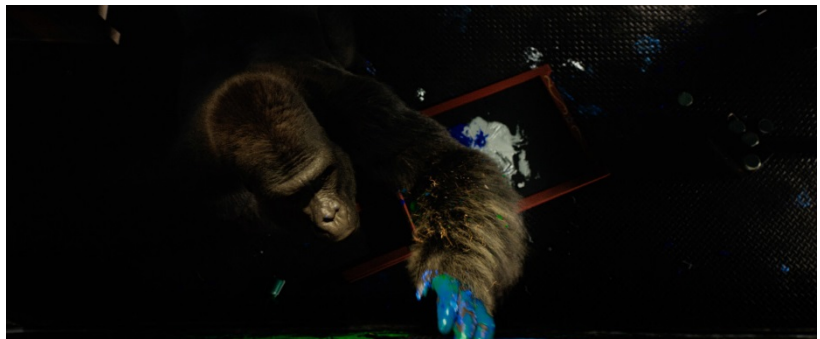
The Mall set was constructed for the hybrid shoot on the huge 007 Stage at Pinewood. The massive, open-plan, practical set was 285’ long by 100’ wide. The largest piece of the set was the interior mall which was 175’ long.

The set was three sets in one that all had to interconnect: the mall, the circus tent and the backstage area where Ivan and the other animals lived. Because so much of the script took place backstage, the design team, led by production designer Molly Hughes, had to think about how to

make it dynamic so that families wouldn't get tired of watching Ivan and Stella chat to each other from their cages.

Hughes had to make sure that Ivan had space to move around. He could climb his big, oak tree trunk up to his upper level and sit and watch the cars go by on the freeway outside; he could take a nap in his hammock; he could sit in his little pool, or lie on his big pillow and watch TV. Bob had to have access to all of the places that Ivan could go to give the director many different angles from which to shoot their scenes. The set was designed so that Ivan could see Mack in his office when he was up on his upper deck, and Mack could see him when he was down below. Ivan also needed to be able to see all the way out the front doors of the mall so he could get the idea of 'freedom' from seeing the trees across the parking lot there. Filmmakers also wanted people in the mall to be able to see the animals hanging out in their habitat when they weren't performing, and have the animals be able to see people walking freely around the mall.

According to Hughes, one of the great things about working in the U.K. is the enormously talented team of prop-makers who fabricated almost everything used on the set, including circus props, snow-cones, fake giant pretzels and funnel cakes. "Since it was the UK, no one knew what a funnel cake was so that was pretty amusing to explain," laughs Hughes. "'Why would you eat that?' was a good question."



The tent was fabricated and aged, and all of the signs were painted and then aged to give a warm, nostalgic feeling of roadside attractions from childhood. "We were really particular about our color palette," says Hughes. "We used colors from those old billboards to create our Ivan billboard and then carried those colors throughout our mall of boardwalk games."

Hughes wanted to get a nostalgic feeling across like you get when you see a vintage Coca-Cola sign, or childhood games like balloon darts, Skee-ball and Whack-a-Mole. The artists hand-painted and aged every sign and graphic on the set, with the exception of a few circus posters, because that was how it was done 50 years ago, when the mall was actually built.

Set decorator Rosie Goodwin comments, "We wanted this whole environment to feel real. We wanted it to feel quite rooted rather than something fantastical or very nostalgic or very glossy. We wanted it to have a real edge to it, to feel grounded in time and all of the mall spaces and the backstage areas to feel like they had been there for a long time and they had those signs of life. That was our design brief—to create a real world."



In Hughes' art department there were 17 people including art directors, assistant art directors, illustrators, storyboard artists, and graphic artists. "It was a literal team effort," says Hughes. "In recent years, because of computers, the art department has become quite like other departments with everyone in their own offices staring into computer screens in the dark. I really wanted to try to avoid that with this film because it was all one big set for the most part and everyone was contributing to it. So we decided to make the office open plan so that everyone could hear creative conversations and contribute their ideas from their research."

## A MUSICAL NOTE

The original song "Free" from "The One and Only Ivan" was written by iconic songwriter Diane Warren, an 11-time Oscar® nominee and Grammy®, Emmy® and Golden Globe® award winner whose songs have been featured in over 100 motion pictures and who has been inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

"I'm so proud to have written the song 'Free' for Thea Sharrock's amazing movie 'The One and Only Ivan.' The theme of this movie deeply touched my heart, and I hope my song deeply touches yours as well. Charlie Puth brought this song to life in a way nobody else could. It is a very special and meaningful song to me, and I hope it becomes one for you as well. I hope it makes you feel a little more free," says Diane Warren.

"Free" is performed by multi-Grammy®-nominated and multi-platinum singer, songwriter and producer, Charlie Puth. Puth is one of the industry's most consistent hitmakers and a celebrated, multi-dimensional artist. Puth has amassed eight multi-platinum singles, four Grammy nominations, two Billboard Music Awards, a Critics Choice Award, and a Golden Globe® nomination.

"It was very exciting to work on this movie and to collaborate with the incomparable Diane Warren on the song 'Free,'" says Charlie Puth. "I can't wait for everyone to hear what we created together for this special film."

The soundtrack features a score by Grammy®-winning Scottish born composer Craig Armstrong. Through his orchestral writing, electronic music and wide ranging artistic collaborations in classical and film music, Armstrong's distinct compositional voice has received worldwide acclaim.

Armstrong has composed scores for both Hollywood and independent films, from Peter Mullan's directorial debut "The Close Trilogy" to the BAFTA, Ivor Novello and Golden Globe® award-winning scores for Baz Luhrmann's "Romeo + Juliet" and "Moulin Rouge!". Recent projects include Giuseppe Capotondi's "The Burnt Orange Heresy" and Oliver Stone's "Snowden."

## ANIMAL CARE & CONSERVATION AWARENESS

The positive message about animal treatment in “The One and Only Ivan” is fittingly aligned with the Walt Disney Company, a recognized leader in animal care and conservation. Disney’s Animal Kingdom, Disney’s Animal Kingdom Lodge and The Seas with Nemo & Friends, all located in Orlando, Fla., are institutions that have been accredited by the AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums).

The movie was made in partnership with the Disney Conservation Fund, which has directed more than \$10 million to support primate conservation efforts across nearly 35 countries, including grants to support all four sub-species of gorilla as well as to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and GRACE (Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education) Center. For more information about the Disney Conservation Fund, watch this [video overview](#).

GRACE is now home to 14 Eastern gorillas, each rescued from poachers and brought to GRACE to live together in a large forest enclosure with the hopes of reintroducing them back to the wild one day. In addition, the program works to advance community conservation in the region with programs that include economic empowerment opportunities for women and conservation clubs that get kids involved in helping gorillas and each other. For more information about gorillas visit [DisneyAnimals.com](https://DisneyAnimals.com).

Dr. Terry Maple, the former president and CEO of Zoo Atlanta, was an animal consultant on the movie. He was instrumental in getting the real Ivan transferred out of the shopping center and to the large gorilla habitat at Zoo Atlanta where he got to live alongside other gorillas. Dr. Maple is also on the advisory board comprised of animal care and conservation experts, which was established before the opening of Disney’s Animal Kingdom in Orlando, Fla.

Dr. Mark Penning, vice president for Disney’s Animals, Science and Environment for Disney Parks, who currently sits on the board of the AZA, observed production on the movie and consulted on the movie’s end credit sequence as well.

## STEP RIGHT UP, FOLKS!



Grab your popcorn and get ready for “The One and Only Ivan”!

Helen Mirren offers a hint at what to expect: “I hope that audiences take away a tender story and a funny story. A story that they can identify with and love the characters. To be entertained by them but also be moved by their stories and their feelings.”

Ariana Greenblatt hopes “the message that people will get while they’re watching this movie is that animals are like people too and they have feelings and they have dreams that they want to conquer.”

And Brooklynn Prince chimes in: “Maybe they will think more about animals in captivity, but I want them to see that there’s love and friendship, too. I want them to see that Ruby’s happy with Stella and Ivan and Bob because they’re the three animals that make her feel at home.”

And lastly, Bryan Cranston shares his thoughts: “I hope that when audiences see ‘The One and Only Ivan,’ they will see what I felt. And that is a compassion for animals and the treatment of animals and the desire to not only reach out and understand them better but understand ourselves better as well. How we treat each other is important, and even though we don’t speak the same language, maybe that’s the story behind the story. There are other human beings with whom we don’t speak the same language, and we should have as much, if not more, compassion and understanding and acceptance and tolerance of them and their needs and their wants.”

Watch “The One and Only Ivan” on Disney+ starting August 21!

