

# A beautiful boy and an old man with a gun

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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New films entering the South African box office on 11 January include *Beautiful Boy*, which chronicles the heartbreak and inspiring experience of survival, relapse, and recovery in a family coping with addiction over many years; *The Old Man & The Gun*, based on the true story of Forrest Tucker, from his audacious escape from San Quentin at the age of 70 to an unprecedented string of heists; a teenage boy who observes the gradual dissolution of his parents' marriage in *Wildlife*; Russian terrorists hold 35,000 people hostage inside a stadium in *Final Score*.

## **Beautiful Boy**

Based on acclaimed journalist David Sheff's bestseller of the same name and his son Nic's breakout memoir *Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines*, the film presents a unique portrait of the ways addiction can destroy lives and the power of love to rebuild them. It's a deeply moving portrait of a family's unwavering love and commitment to each other in the face of their son's addiction and his attempts at recovery.

Harrowing, heartbreaking and, yet, full of joy, hope, and love, *Beautiful Boy* recounts the rehabs, disappearances, broken promises, and rage as Nic sinks deeper into the drug world, as David continues in his efforts to save his "beautiful boy" from the ravages of addiction.

Directed by Felix van Groeningen, *Beautiful Boy* is produced Plan B Entertainment's Academy Award-winners Brad Pitt, Dede Gardner, and Jeremy Kleiner. Nan Morales is executive producer. The screenplay by Academy Award nominee Luke Davies and van Groeningen. The film stars Academy Award nominees Steve Carell and Timothée Chalamet.

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## The Old Man & The Gun

The true story of Forrest Tucker, from his audacious escape from San Quentin at the age of 70 to an unprecedented string of heists that confounded authorities and enchanted the public.

Robert Redford has played many charisma-laden rebels and renegades in his expansive career – the sharpshooting train burglar in *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* or the con artist in the classic caper *The Sting* – and now brings the legend of Forrest Tucker to life in *The Old Man & The Gun*.

Tucker only ever had one occupation, but it was one he was unusually gifted at and pursued with unabashed joy. It just happened to be bank robbing. In the early 1980s, at a septuagenarian age, Tucker embarked on a final legend-making spree of heists with the “Over-the-Hill Gang,” a posse of elderly bandits who employed smooth charm over aggression to make off with millions. Tucker never stopped defying age, expectations, or rules - he made his twilight the pinnacle of his life of crime. If the sole art form he knew was robbery, he was darned if he wasn't going to try to perfect it, no matter how elusive the dream.

Wrapped up in the pursuit are detective John Hunt (Casey Affleck), who becomes captivated with Forrest's commitment to his craft, and a woman (Sissy Spacek) who loves him in spite of his chosen profession.

It is written and directed by writer-director David Lowery.

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## Final Score

Believing his traitorous brother Dimitri (Pierce Brosnan) is somewhere in the stadium, Arkady (Ray Stevenson), the former leader of a revolution in the Russian state of Sakovya, locks down the Boleyn Ground during the European semi-final between West Ham United and Dynamo FCC.

In the crowd with his niece, Danni (Lara Peake), is US-veteran Mike Knox (Dave Bautista), who stumbles upon the plot and goes about taking out Arkady's heavily armed team. Can he get to Arkady before Arkady gets to Dimitri? The fate of 35,000 people inside the stadium – and many more in Russia – depends on it.

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*Final Score* is directed by Scott Mann from a screenplay by Jonathan Frank, David T Lynch, and Keith Lynch.

## **Wildlife**

Elegantly adapted from Richard Ford's novel *Wildlife*, Carey Mulligan delivers one of her finest performances to date as Jeanette, a complex woman whose self-determination and self-involvement disrupts the values and expectations of a 1960s nuclear family. Fourteen-year-old Joe, played by newcomer Ed Oxenbould, is the only child of Jeanette (Mulligan) and Jerry (Jake Gyllenhaal) - a housewife and a golf pro - in a small town in 1960s Montana.

Nearby, an uncontrolled forest fire rages close to the Canadian border, 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. With precise details and textures of its specific time and place, the film commits to the viewpoint of a teenage boy observing the gradual

dissolution of his parents' marriage.

Directed by Paul Dano and co-written by Dano and Zoe Kazan.

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## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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