

2014 American supernatural  
psychological horror film

# IT FOLLOWS



After a strange sexual encounter, a teenager finds herself haunted by nightmarish visions and the inescapable sense that something demonic is after her. If it catches her, it will kill her and pursue the previous person to have passed it on. Jay and her friends must now race against the demons and find a way to escape the horror.

**Filmed in Detroit,  
*It Follows* debuted at the  
2014 Cannes Film Festival.**

**Written and directed by  
suburban Detroit native, David  
Robert Mitchell, this smart,  
original, and above all terrifying  
movie is the rare modern horror  
film that works on multiple levels  
and leaves a lingering sting.**

After a strange sexual encounter, a teenager, Jay, finds herself haunted by nightmarish visions and the inescapable sense that something demonic is after her. If it catches her, it will kill her and pursue the previous person to have passed it on. Jay and her friends must now race against the demons and find a way to escape the horror.

Jay is now part of a chain letter-like curse where she's pursued by some nebulous, shape-shifting thing until she passes "It" on." Wherever they go, "It" follows

There are several startling images in the film that stay with you after the movie ends, perhaps none more unshakeable than that of an older man naked on the rooftop of a suburban home eyeing the camera with a mortifying death stare.

"We got that shot as quickly as we could, is the best way I can say it," said director David Robert Mitchell, a Clawson native who filmed *It Follows* in and around metro Detroit in the fall of 2013. "We worked fast," he said.

The expediency paid off. *It Follows* has been winning rave reviews since it premiered at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival and has become one of the best-reviewed horror films.

Though the film is set in the Detroit suburbs, it has the dreamlike feel of *Anywhere, U.S.A.* However, local audiences will pick up on references to 8 Mile Road and recognize landmarks such as Clark's Ice Cream & Yogurt in Berkley, and Clawson parks where Mitchell said he hung out as a kid.

## FILM LOCATIONS

### JAYCEE PARK

1755 East Long Lake Road, Troy

### JAY'S HOUSE

38721 Trafalgar Way, Sterling Heights

Among other scenes, this is where the roof scene was shot.



### PACKARD PLANT

East Grand Boulevard and Concord Street, Detroit

Designed by famous Michigan architect, Albert Kahn, this was once considered the most advanced auto production facility. The former Packard Motor Company plant in Detroit is one of the most recognizable symbols of the decline of the city's once vibrant auto industry.

Few factories transformed the industrial landscape as the Packard plant, which rose from a cow pasture on the east side of Detroit in 1903 to become the world's largest auto factory.

### UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT

(private, Roman Catholic university)  
4001 West McNichols Road, Detroit

### NORTHVILLE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

41001 Seven Mile Road, Northville

Jay learns about "It" from Hugh during the scene filmed here.



### CLAWSON HIGH SCHOOL

101 John M Avenue, Clawson

In this scene, the group plans to kill the entity by luring it into a swimming pool and dropping electrical devices into the water. Jay, waiting in the pool, spots the entity and realizes it has taken the appearance of her father.

### NICK'S COUNTRY OVEN

511 West 14 Mile Road, Clawson

This is the restaurant Jay and Hugh go to after the cinema.



### CLARK'S ICE CREAM AND YOGURT

12 Mile Road, Berkley

### HIGH LIFT BUILDING,

Water Works Park, Detroit

This is where the exterior of the pool scene was shot.



### REDFORD THEATRE

17360 Lahser Road

The theater featured at the beginning of the film is the Redford Theatre, a historic Japanese-style theater with a fully functioning Wurlitzer organ, in the Old Redford neighborhood of Detroit. Jaime "Jay" Height goes on a date with her new boyfriend, Hugh. At the cinema, Hugh points out a girl whom Jay says she cannot see. Afraid, he asks that they leave.



### GREG'S HOUSE

38748 Trafalgar Way, Sterling Heights

Jay sees the entity in the form of Greg. It smashes a window at Greg's house and enters.

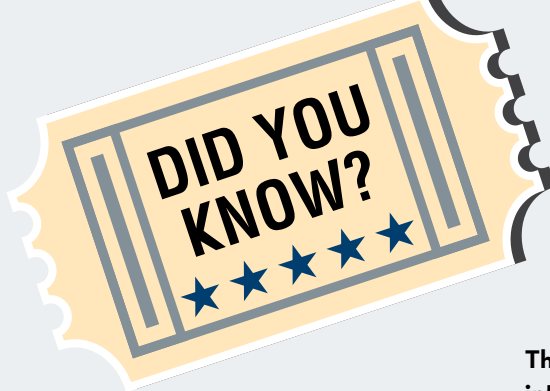
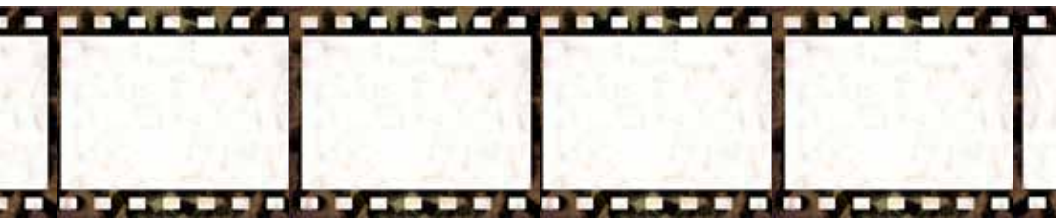
## ATTRACTIONS

If it's a lively city with energy that you crave, Detroit is the place to go. The city is on a resurgence thanks to young entrepreneurs and artists opening up cafés, businesses and other exciting ventures. District Detroit will be 50 blocks of thriving businesses, parks, restaurants, bars and event destinations. The district connects downtown and Midtown into one contiguous, walkable area, where families, sports fans, entertainment lovers and others who crave a vibrant urban setting, can enjoy. Another great way to get around downtown is to take the light rail system, known as the People Mover. The three-mile elevated track system makes 13 stops in the downtown Detroit area. It makes a great art tour too, with each station loaded with impressive art.

### MOTOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

2648 West Grand Boulevard, Detroit

It was the sound that changed America. Berry Gordy's legendary sound made its mark not only with music but culturally and socially too. The sound became one of the most significant musical accomplishments and stunning success story of the 20th century. The Supremes, Smokey Robinson, the Temptations, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Marvin Gaye, Michael Jackson, Martha



the starting point without ever reversing the path. In some homes, adjoining bedrooms share closets and bathrooms. This kind of fluid floor plan would make this style of house particularly desirable if an escape from “It” was needed.

Reeves & the Vandellas and many more made their mark at Motown. And it is undergoing a huge expansion. Visit Studio A, the recording studio in Berry Gordy’s apartment. You’ll find out how Berry Gordy started it all with an \$800 loan from his family. Step back in time to the golden days of Motown!



PHOTO: CIRCLE MICHIGAN

### GREEKTOWN

*Monroe Avenue between Brush and St. Antoine streets, Detroit*

One of Detroit’s livelier neighborhoods, Greektown has a bundle of casinos, bars and restaurants, which get especially crowded right after Red Wings and Lions games.



PHOTO: VISIT DETROIT

### PEGASUS TAVERN

*558 Monroe Street, Detroit*

For an unforgettable Greek dining experience, check out the Pegasus, next

to the Greektown Casino. The Greek cuisine at the Pegasus is often referred to as “food of the gods.” Find out why for yourself.

### FOX THEATRE

*2211 Woodward Avenue, Detroit*

Detroit’s crown jewel, the Fox Theatre, has played host to some of the biggest names in show business and holds its ground as one of the top-grossing theaters of its size in the nation. Did you know that Detroit is home to the second largest theatre district in the United States behind only New York City? Besides the Fox Theatre, check out Fisher Theatre, Gem and Century theaters, and the Masonic Temple. Or see Music Hall, Second City, or Mark Ridley’s Comedy Castle, just to name a few.



PHOTO: VISIT DETROIT

### ENJOY FREE FESTIVALS

From the Detroit Jazz Festival and Dally in the Alley, to Detroit’s Electronic Music Festival and the Grand Prix, there is always free entertainment options in the city. [www.visitdetroit.com](http://www.visitdetroit.com)

***It Follows* had a 12-hour shoot at the Redford Theatre. Several members of the theater were extras in the film. According to Steve Overstreet, the theater coordinator that day, the cast and crew were very inclusive of the volunteers. There were probably at least two dozen members from the film there that day. The theater hosted the cast and crew’s private screening of the film several months later. Lynn Walls, the theater’s organist, was the person playing the organ during the film shoot. Since the film, visitors have come from far and near. One of the furthest known was from London, England.**



PHOTO: REDFORD THEATRE

The dilapidated house that Hugh hid in, and that Jay and her friends explored, was built in a style called American Foursquare. This style was popular from the 1890s through the 1930s. Many floor plans for the foursquare feature circular traffic patterns, where one can proceed through several rooms and return to

**The time frame of the movie is intentionally kept ambiguous so that it resembles a dream. Some of the cars shown are from more recent times. Many appear to be from the ’60s to late ’80s. Conflicting technology include Yara on a device that looks like a shell-compact, but she reads from it like an e-book reader and uses it as a light source at one point. Also, the girl from the beginning of the film uses a cellphone and drives a modern automobile, with several modern vehicles in view.**

Jay and Kelly’s mother’s face is never clearly shown. In the first scene, she talking on the phone in the kitchen with her face completely covered by her hair. In every other scene, her face is either out of focus or partially cut out of frame.

**The poem that Jay’s English teacher reads to the class is T.S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” The poem seems to share some commonalities with the film.**

The monstrous “It” is often said to be a metaphor for sexually transmitted diseases and sexual promiscuity. When asked about the film’s concept, director David Robert Mitchell said, “The basic idea of being followed by something that looked like different people, that was very slow, and always coming came from a recurring nightmare I had when I was a

## DID YOU KNOW?



kid. Later, as an adult, I added the sexual aspect of passing on this terrible thing. It came at two different points of my life.”

**Jay is short for Jamie, a tribute to scream queen Jamie Lee Curtis. In the film, Jay has a sister named Kelly. Jamie Lee Curtis also has a sister named Kelly Curtis.**

The film was shot mainly with wide-angle lenses to give the film a more expansive, intimidating feel.

**Director David Robert Mitchell said in an interview that the monster could potentially board a plane in order to follow the cursed person.**

The film takes inspiration and tropes from horror films from the '60s to the '80s, especially from the slasher classic *Halloween* (1978). The girl in the opening



scene of *It Follows* is named Annie, and one of Laurie's friends in *Halloween* was named Annie.

**The film alludes to teenage problems through its props. This is seen when Jay is lining up blades of grass on her upper leg (cutting/suicide), as well as Jay's uneaten tray of food in her room (eating disorders) that first has a pill laid out on a napkin, and later, the pill is the only thing gone from the tray (drug dependency).**

The entire score by Rich Vreeland (“Disasterpeace”) was completed in less than three weeks.

**According to the production company the film's budget was \$1.3 million and was shot entirely in the state of Michigan for tax advantages. A year after its theatrical release, it grossed over \$20 million.**

Disasterpeace recorded the score for the film because the director, David Robert Mitchell, was a huge fan of the video game *Fez* (which Disasterpeace also did the music for).

**Not only do the set props prevent the viewer from placing the year, the clothing prevents the viewer from placing the time of year. Throughout the film's short duration clothing ranges from coats, jackets, t-shirts and swimsuits during the day, to barely anything at all at night...all outdoors with no signs of discomfort.**

Yara reads out a section from Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel, “The Idiot:” “But here I should imagine the most terrible part of the whole punishment is, not the bodily

pain at all-but the certain knowledge that in an hour,-then in 10 minutes, then in half a minute, then now-this very instant-your soul must quit your body and that you will no longer be a man-and that this is certain, certain!”

**David Robert Mitchell started writing the screenplay in 2011.**

There are some high school campus announcements. One is in reference to wrestlers handing forms in to Mr. Dwiggin. This is a nod to the sound editor/re-recording mixer Christian Dwiggin.

**Rich Vreeland: composer of the soundtrack; plays the announcer in the high school where Jay is searching for Hugh.**

Mike Lanier, who plays the very tall “It” is a 7-foot-7-inch Detroit resident who designs engines for General Motors and is one half of the world's tallest twins. Here is his take on filming, “This was 100 percent improv on my part, since I hadn't read the script. So when I chased Maika down the hallway into her bedroom, I had no idea how she and her friends were going to react. They all started looking at me and screaming, and the intensity of their terror freaked me out, too. I was like, Oh my gosh, I'm a horror creature! So, we shot the scene from every angle, and probably did it 25 times. I found it amazing that the girls could keep doing that same utterly terrified freak-out every time I came into the room. It was so realistic, I got chills myself. That poor girl who plays Yara [Olivia Luccardi], she was eating a Twizzler in the scene, and we did it so many times, she must have eaten the whole bag. At one point, I thought of

doing a take where I chase the girls with a Twizzler in my mouth—just for the blooper reel.”

**Red or pink are used to foreshadow the upcoming appearance of “It” as they appear either in the background or on a character's piece of clothing whenever it attacks.**

The director said that neither a condom, nor same-gender sex, would stop the monster and the curse would still be passed.

**In the beginning of the film, when the main character Jay is seen looking into the mirror as she gets ready for her date with Hugh, there are two photos on the mirror: one of Jay in the swimming pool, and the other of her and her father. At the end of the film, “It” takes the form of her father and attacks Jay in the swimming pool. We also see him in a photo towards the end of the movie.**



Early in the film when Jay's friends are watching a movie on the old TV, you can hear the following lines from the movie loud and clear: “You're afraid of an overload. You can't tap enough electricity wherever you get it from to control a strong enough charge.” Later in the film when Jay's friends plan to electrocute “It” in the pool, it turns out that they can't tap enough electricity to get a strong enough charge, and the plan fails.

## DID YOU KNOW?



**A ball seems to follow the curse throughout the entire movie and soon after Jay gets infected, a ball hits her window and lands in her garden. When they go to Hugh's house they find a picture of him holding a ball. After Jay has slept with Greg, a ball is seen bouncing from the direction of Jay's house towards Greg's house. Finally, when Jay sees Greg dying, the motif on her t-shirt, a blonde girl and a ball, is seen clearly. The ball is covered by her hair until the very moment he dies. Jay is still wearing the t-shirt later when Paul tries to kiss her, implying that she did not go through with her plan to pass "It" on to the guys on the boat.**

Jay's friends play Old Maid when she returns from her date with Hugh. The rules of that game are very similar to the rules of "It." i.e., you have to pass something on in order not to lose. Moreover, most of the specific cards shown hold strong similarities to characters and events that are not seen until later in the movie. Thus, the following cards are shown: "Cranky Kluck" (angry teacher); "Old Maid" (old lady); "Winnie Waite" (waitress); "Bikey Bess" (girl on bike); and "Bronco Buster" (cowboy with guns).

**Although the entire movie seems to be reminiscent of the '60s-'80s with no modern technology, Yara is seen several times with a shell-looking touch screen. It looks like a compact mirror, but we see she's reading something from it. Also Annie, the girl in the opening scene, is shown calling her father on her mobile phone when she is sitting on the beach.**

When Jay's friends play Old Maid, there is a slow zoom in on a card that has a cartoon of an old lady on it. This foreshadows the next scene when Jay first sees "It" follow her in the form of an old lady.



PHOTO: FRITZ AND HELENA SCHMITT

**The paddling pool in Jay's garden is depicted as a pleasant and safe place and the kids have several pleasant memories from their childhood. In the present however, bigger pools of water, like lakes, oceans and public swimming pools, all seem to be associated with danger and "It." The first girl is killed on the shore of a lake and Jay and Hugh are sitting on the shore just before Hugh passes the curse on to Jay. In the classroom, just prior to the appearance of the "Old Maid," the camera pans across the cardboard where the text, "required reading, The Old Man and the Sea," is written. Later, when Jay faces the peeing woman in the kitchen, three paintings are seen just before the attack: the first one, depicting a roaring ocean,**

**is seen when Jay is talking to Paul on the couch, and the other two, both depicting lakes, are seen as she walks into the kitchen. In the same scene, the movie playing on the old TV shows a blonde woman in the ocean being attacked by a monster. The subsequent attack by the small boy takes place in the beach cabin near the shores of a lake, and the final attack by Jay's father takes place in a big public swimming pool.**

The final scenes of *It Follows* contain several allusions to death and the souls of the dead or ghosts as they are commonly known. In the hospital, Yara reads the following line from "The Idiot," "Your soul will leave your body and you will no longer be a person." In the next scene, when Jay and Paul walk down the street, the neighborhood is decorated with fake cobwebs and pumpkins, indicating that the scene takes place around Halloween. Halloween can be traced back to ancient traditions set to honor the souls of the dead. Jay is wearing a white dress and Paul is wearing a long white hoodie, both of them bearing a slight resemblance to popular depictions of ghosts. A dead-end sign is seen both in front of them and to their right. The man next to them is busy removing dead leaves. What can be seen of the inscription on Jay's cast reads, "Here lie the bones of Jay."

**Someone (or something) in the distance appears to still be following during the final scene of the film.**

When Jay and her friends talk to Hugh, Jay is seen carefully placing five pieces of grass on her thigh. Later, when Jay inspects herself after "It" has grabbed her under water in the public pool, she finds exactly five marks on her leg.

**One of the house address' is 1492—it was intentional.**

The PA in the school corridor announces auditions for the up-coming school musical, "The Mouse that Roared." That play is not actually a musical.

**There are no opening credits at the beginning of the film, and the title does not appear on-screen until the end of the film.**

In the film, after banging really hard on Greg's door, finally he has his window broken. In this scene, a rock was snatched from the garden and thrown through the window. The window was a Hollywood fake break-away window. At 10:30 p.m., after filming of the broken window was complete, they filmed the banging on the door, but the director didn't tell the homeowner. So, late at night, there was banging on the door and yelling to open up. A scared homeowner was on the other side of the door ready to open it, but the crew was still filming. That would have been something if the bath-robed homeowner had opened the door...Take two! The homeowner still has a piece of the break-away glass as a souvenir.



PHOTO: FRITZ AND HELENA SCHMITT



The Michigan Film and Digital Media Office (MFDMO) was created in 1979 to assist and attract incoming production companies and to promote the growth of Michigan's indigenous industry. Since its inception, the MFDMO commissioner has been responsible for implementing a program that lives within the parameters of Michigan law and works to ensure the program runs efficiently and effectively. Today, the MFDMO is working diligently to guarantee the film and digital media program accomplishes key results of private investment and workforce development by encouraging high wages, high-tech jobs and talent retention.

*It Follows tour is the sole property of the Michigan Film & Digital Media Office.  
Special thanks to Janet Kasic of Circle Michigan for content creation.*

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