

ONE PIECE

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Piece Of The Action

ACTORS IÑAKI GODOY AND EMILY RUDD TALK ABOUT
STARRING IN *One Piece*, NETFLIX'S NEW ADAPTATION
OF THE WORLD'S BEST-SELLING MANGA

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OF THE 10 BEST-selling authors of all time, some names are obvious – William Shakespeare tops the chart, with sales of over (minimum estimate) two billion, and JK Rowling, Agatha Christie, Barbara Cartland and Enid Blyton are all in there.

Then there's Eiichiro Oda. With estimated sales of around *half a billion* (just think about that for a second), the Japanese author/artist has outsold Dr Seuss, Tom Clancy and Stephen King. Not bad for a writer who's not yet 50 and who only penned his most successful creation *One Piece* (the biggest selling manga title of all time) in 1997.

If you're one of the 500 million people who've bought one of the 105 collected volumes of *One Piece* (or indeed have caught one of the 1,000+ episodes of its animated small screen spin-off, or played one of the 40 tie-in videogames), you'll need no introduction to the high seas adventures of Luffy, a superpowered teen who travels the globe, ably assisted by his band of brothers the Straw Hats, in search of the world's ultimate treasure.

CREATOR-APPROVED

Bringing *One Piece* to TV in live-action form has been a long-time labour of love for showrunners Steven Maeda (*The X-Files*, *Pan Am*, *Helix*) and Matt Owens (*The Defenders*, *Agents Of SHIELD*, *Luke Cage*) – and indeed for Eiichiro Oda, who, fans will be happy to know, is intimately involved in this eight-part series. In fact, he's so integral to this lavishly budgeted Netflix adaptation that he had casting approval for every one of the series' yast cast, including that of the show's hero, Monkey D Luffy.

"It was the best compliment of my career!" squeals the contagiously enthusiastic Iñaki Godoy about getting the okay from the great Eiichiro Oda. Despite being just 20, the Mexican actor is already a well-known face on the world's biggest streamer, playing Bruno Lazcano in Spanish language hit *Who Killed Sara?* and the shapeshifting Juan Ruiz in

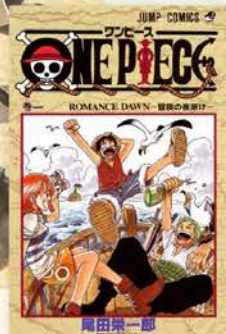


Iñaki Godoy as Monkey D Luffy gets to the point.

Netflix's one-season wonder *The Imperfects*. But *One Piece* will be Godoy's first leading role. "I knew about *One Piece* before, because I'm very into videogames and geek stuff," he tells SFX. "But I never read it and I never saw the animation, so when I got the role, it was a new thing for me. I gotta say that after filming the first season, I've been catching up with the whole thing." Already a dedicated admirer of *One Piece* was Godoy's co-star Emily Rudd. In the show, she plays Nami, a secretive thief who is one of the Straw Hats – a part, she tells us, she'd coveted for a long time. "Nami's big moment in the East Blue arc, which I won't spoil, was the moment that solidified me as a *One Piece* fan," the 30-year-old actor says. "It's the scene that

I can just think about and want to cry. It made me go, 'Oh, this is not only a silly, adventurous, playful show, it's also a show about real stuff, real emotions. It has so much heart.' So I'd always been like, 'Man, if I can play somebody, it would be Nami.' "One of my best friends is Matt Owens, who I've known for about six years," she continues. "We used to be at the same agency, and they said, 'Hey, why don't you guys meet? You're both anime nerds.' So we bonded over our mutual love for anime and manga, and then he was like, 'Hey, I'm thinking about bringing *One Piece* to Netflix.' I said, 'That's a crazy undertaking, but if anyone can do it, it's you.' *One Piece* is his life, it's his passion." Given his long-time love of *One Piece*, working with his hero Eiichiro Oda was a nerve-racking experience for the 34-year-old showrunner. "I don't think I've ever been more nervous for anything in my entire life," the writer explains. "Here was this person who has created this story I hold so much love and reverence for, and I'm asking him to trust me with his baby." "I'm not going to lie, he was tough in the beginning – this wasn't the first attempt at a live-action *One Piece*, and we weren't the first people to try to express it in a new way. But I think once he realised we were coming from the right place – trying to protect this series

and anime series might be cautious about a live-action adaptation, but points towards Eiichiro Oda's involvement as evidence of this series' authenticity. While some comic book creators are conspicuously absent from their live-action spin-offs (hello, Alan Moore), this loving and largely faithful adaptation has Eiichiro Oda's signature on every frame. "He's been involved from day one," Rudd says. "He's read all of the scripts, he approved all of the cast members. For the creator of such an important series to have a hand over our adaptation is massive for me as a fan. I think it matters a lot to the other existing fans as well. But outside of that, the show is made by people who love the series – they love the anime, they love the manga... If they weren't familiar, they became familiar and fell in love, and I think that really comes across on screen." Though the series makes some slight revisions to the source material, there were some aspects of the *One Piece* mythology Oda was insistent on the showrunners not changing. So, rest assured, the backstories of the various Straw Hats are as they were in the manga, as are the powers that the Devil Fruits give to whoever eats them ("That was



something we were asked not to mess with," admits Owens). "We want to honour the work of Mr Oda and the whole history of *One Piece*," says Godoy. "We respect it, we love it, we think it's great. And the live action definitely stays true to the source material. The history of *One Piece* is great and more people should know about it, because it can inspire you to be the best version of yourself and to be more friendly and follow your dreams." With 105 (and counting) collected volumes of *One Piece* out there, there's more than enough material for Netflix to continue this series for years, past decades. As yet, a second season hasn't been okayed, but the cast remain hopeful. For the moment, its star is enjoying devouring the manga and anime series, and following Luffy's personal journey beyond those season one scripts. "I'm reading *One Piece* and I'm watching *One Piece*, because I like it," Godoy laughs. "I'm a genuine fan. We'll have to find out together what happens with the live action, but regardless of what happens, I'm a *One Piece* fan, dude!" One *Piece* is on Netflix from 31 August.



Mackenyu is Roronoa Zoro
The son of martial arts icon Sonny Chiba talks *One Piece*

Tell us a bit about your character. Zoro has green hair, three swords, and he holds one in his mouth. He's intent on being the best swordsman ever. How familiar were you with the *One Piece* manga and anime before you got this part? Every Japanese kid grows up with *One Piece*. Even if you aren't very familiar with it, you will know who these characters are because it's iconic all around the world. As someone who grew up watching the anime and reading the manga, it was an honour to play Zoro. Is it more of a challenge filming a series that involves so many special effects? The set designs were amazing and made me feel a part of the *One Piece* world. The VFX were added in later, so that did not make filming much of a challenge. Are you much of a sci-fi/fantasy fan? I love sci-fi/fantasy and it's why I have done so many of those projects. What, to date, has been your most enjoyable day on set and why? Zoro has so many iconic and famous stories that people know and love from the manga and the anime it's hard to pick a favourite arc. I can't tell you about the scenes in the Netflix series and how we filmed them, but it was very memorable to do and there were many special moments.



Something mysterious is going on... No spoilers!



The gang's all here – meet the Straw Hats in the flesh.