

WITH A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE WE FINALLY GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY. STARS LUPITA NYONG'O AND JOSEPH QUINN TALK ABOUT HOW THIS FILM BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO THE FRANCHISE

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T H E S O U N D O F S I L E N C E





**T**HE FIRST *QUIET PLACE* FROM 2018 was a model example of in medias res, a film that dropped us into the middle of an unimaginable dystopia, 471 days after the Earth was invaded by an army of visually impaired ETs. Yet while 2020's *A Quiet Place: Part II* included an 11-minute pre-title sequence finally depicting that first attack, there's still much we don't know about how the world of *A Quiet Place* came to be. That's all about to change.

By the end of *Part II*, we were 477 days into the alien occupation. Now, spin-off movie *A Quiet Place: Day One* rewinds the story to the very beginning, while moving the focus away, for the first time, from the Abbott clan. The result promises to be a markedly different kind of *Quiet Place* film.

**FOUND FAMILY**

"I would say it has a different tone, as you're following new characters," Lupita Nyong'o, who plays Samira in the new movie, tells *SFX*. "In the two previous films, the connectivity of the characters is intrinsic because they're family, so you immediately understand why they need to stay together.

"With this, we're meeting characters that are only brought together by this catastrophe, so it's like, how do two people who are perfect strangers react to survival moments such as this? That offers a new kind of tension and new friction to this universe."

Nyong'o is keeping schtum as to her character's background ("Oh, I can't tell you that!" she laughs, when *SFX* attempts to probe her about Samira's profession), but the trailer suggests she isn't as battle-hardened as Emily Blunt's Evelyn Abbott had become by the time of the first film.

One thing that is clear, however, is that she's buddied up for much of the movie by another character fresh to the franchise, played by Brit

actor – and soon-to-be Human Torch – Joseph Quinn. "His name is Eric and he's very far away from home at the beginning of the film," Quinn, who gets to act in his own accent for a change, tells us. "The idea of loss and grief and self-preservation and why they're trying to survive is fairly understandable in the first two films, because they're family, whereas in this one we're meeting two strangers that approach mortality and this armageddon in a very different way."

This is no run-of-the-mill, spur-of-the-moment, knocked-off spin-off. Instead *Day One* promises to be a distinct, full-blooded movie in its own right, simply one that's adjacent to two of the biggest crossover horrors of the past six years – films which both Nyong'o and Quinn are fans of.

"I really liked the premise of *A Quiet Place*," beams Nyong'o, who has history with the genre, having headlined in Jordan Peele's *Us*. "But what I loved most of all is that they're very character-driven. You really invest in the lives of these people, as you learn about what it's like to live in a quiet world. So when they're in danger, you're so much in their perspective."

"I watched the first one in the theatre," Quinn remembers of that 2018 movie, which grossed over \$341 million worldwide against a \$17 million budget.

"I had such a fantastic experience watching this brilliant, horrifying and powerful film. Obviously the second movie was a big success as well, so when I heard that they were doing a third I was thinking, 'I wonder what they're going to do with it?'"

What indeed? *Day One* is the first *Quiet Place* movie not to be written or directed by John Krasinski. Instead, it's masterminded by indie darling Michael Sarnoski who in 2021 won dynamite reviews for his debut feature *Pig*.

"I'd watched *Pig*, and was a big fan," says Quinn of Sarnoski's Nic Cage-starring drama. "Seeing a franchise as revered and well-



Samira (Lupita Nyong'o) and Eric (Joseph Quinn).

IT'S OH SO QUIET

Who would and wouldn't survive in the world of *A Quiet Place*?

If the world really was invaded by blind extraterrestrials with a keen sense of hearing, some people would be naturally better at surviving than others. We wouldn't, for instance, bet on Brian Blessed or Alan Carr living more than a day before being ripped apart by a Death Angel. So which of the cast members of *Day One* would be best and worst at navigating a world where any kind of noise is likely to get you killed?

"Oh, I would have trouble because I like to talk to myself," smiles Lupita Nyong'o. "Like when I'm stressed out, I talk to myself and give myself pep talks to get me through. So the very thing I'd need to do to stay alive would be the thing that killed me."

"Alex Wolff wouldn't be good at staying quiet," says Joseph Quinn. "I don't think I'd do well either. I think Lupita would last the longest, to be honest."

And who does Nyong'o believe would be the cast member most likely to survive?

"Oh, Djimon Hounsou," she laughs. "Hands down!"

STUDIO CANAL

realised as this one in the hands of a different voice was very intriguing. Then the fact that Lupita was doing it was like, 'Okay, this is very interesting now.'

"Michael was wonderful to work with," Nyong'o adds. "I think that what makes him a unique choice for this is that he has the ability to make very dark and violent material that's tender and has heart, and he brought that to this story. I was surprised at the depth of feeling that goes into the story, even as you're achieving all these huge-scale, horrific moments."

"He's got a very distinct voice and knows what he wants, and both of us had an enormous amount of trust in him," Quinn says of his director. "It was fantastic watching him do his thing in this studio environment. He's an indie filmmaker and it was cool watching him in this traditionally Hollywood world, and he handled it expertly."

Though *Day One* has a fresh face at the wheel, that doesn't mean that John Krasinski is entirely absent. As well as directing the first film, Krasinski co-wrote the screenplay with Scott Beck and Bryan Woods, and was the solo writer and director on *Part II*.

While he wasn't behind the camera or typewriter on this one, he does share a "Story by" credit on *Day One*, alongside Sarnoski, and was on-set for the first day of shooting, "to bless us off", as Nyong'o puts it.

"It was actually John who pitched the movie to me," the Oscar-winning actress reveals, "and he told me he never intended for *A Quiet Place* to be a franchise. The only reason why he moved forward with the second film, and now this third one, was because he wanted to, with each film, offer something new to the genre.

"He achieved that by hiring Michael Sarnoski, because he's done something really new, and I think unique, with the genre – staying true to it, but breathing real fresh air into it as well."

While *Day One* promises to be a different kind of *Quiet Place* story, there are certain tropes from the franchise that have to be observed – otherwise, well, it's not a *Quiet Place* movie. Though the film offers up plenty of noise and fury before and during that initial attack, after that the rules of survival are still the same: stay quiet and you'll be okay. Make a sound and you're toast.

"It reminded me of being a kid and playing 'the floor is lava', that game that kids play when they jump on the furniture," Nyong'o says. "In that game, everybody agrees on the rules and sticks to them and it affects every single movement you make.

"It's the same with *A Quiet Place* – we had to keenly listen to each other and react to every single noise. That created a very exciting acting experience because you never know what's going to happen. One person could step on something on the ground that wasn't written into the script, but we can all hear it, so you need to react to it. So there was a spontaneity that was very exciting."

While acting with precious little dialogue is new to Nyong'o, working with special effects isn't. As a veteran of two *Black Panther* movies, and having mo-capped the character of Maz Kanata in three *Star Wars* flicks, she's a dab hand at greenscreen work and acting opposite things that are dropped in in post. But she says the unique premise of *A Quiet Place: Day One* meant that the acting challenges were different to her work in the MCU.

"In some ways, I felt more supported in this," she ponders. "The rule of the game is that the world is quiet, and so yes, there were monsters that we needed to react to, but every noise was the enemy. So the added things, the creatures and everything like that, yes, the other films that I've done have definitely oiled my wheels in that department, but I enjoyed having that one rule to always play with in every scene."

While those two *Black Panther* films helped prep Nyong'o for working on *Day One*, for Joseph Quinn, it's the other way round. Okay, he'd done a season of *Stranger Things* before this (he played the *Dungeons & Dragons*-loving Eddie Munson in series four), but this was the first effects-heavy movie for the actor – which which will have certainly helped for Matt Shakman's forthcoming *Fantastic Four* movie.

"It requires you to use your imagination in different ways," Quinn says about his first experience on a big-budget effects film. "But there's also something that's quite practical about bluescreens and stuff, you just get used to them popping up. I mean, it didn't feel a million miles away from what I was used to on *Stranger Things*, but it was still an adjustment."

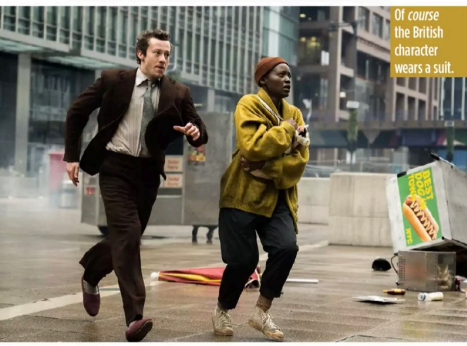
Rest assured, *Quiet Place* fans, *Day One* isn't a permanent steer away from the story of the Abbott family. Though it doesn't have a release date yet, Krasinski is inked to write, direct – and who knows, maybe cameo in – *A Quiet Place Part III* sometime in 2025 or 2026.

As regards a direct sequel to this film, however, neither Nyong'o nor Quinn say they know about any plans, and both claim there's no talk yet about them guesting in *Part III* (though there is a connection between *Day One* and *Part II* in Djimon Hounsou's Henri).

But while Nyong'o doesn't rule out a follow-up for her and Quinn, she does suggest that this series has infinite possibilities going forward, telling stories that don't necessarily involve Samira, Eric or Evelyn Abbott.

"What I love about this whole franchise," she enthuses, "is that in this alien invasion story, there are so many opportunities to follow different people on day one itself. We narrow in on these two characters, but there's how many billion people in the world...? This franchise could go on forever!"

*A Quiet Place: Day One* is in cinemas from 28 June.



Of course the British character wears a suit.



Djimon Hounsou as Henri.



Director Michael Sarnoski (right).



Safe to say Samira's not having the best day.