

# NYCC 2019: The King's Man is about love and war, father and son

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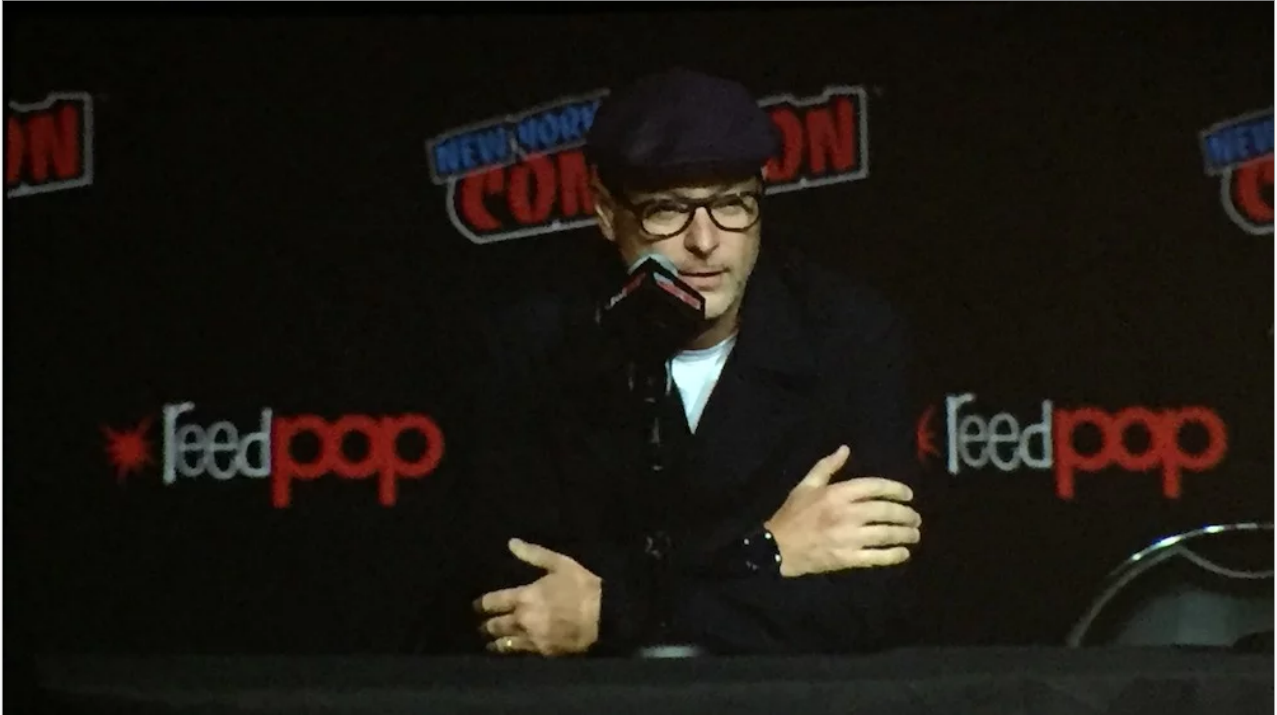
## Lawrence of Arabia, with more crazy spy action

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"I don't want to watch any of those movies," said *The King's Man* director/co-writer Matthew Vaughn, ragging on traditional Oscar fare. Speaking at the 20th Century Fox panel at New York Comic-Con 2019, Vaughn name-dropped a number of films that inspired this World War I-era prequel to his *Kingsman* films: *Doctor Zhivago*, *The French Connection*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, and especially *The Man Who Would Be King*. From the looks of what was shown at the panel, *The King's Man* looks like it'll be [Vaughn's take on the movie epic](#).

Joining Vaughn were cast members Ralph Fiennes, who plays the Duke of Oxford, Harris Dickinson as his son Conrad, and Djimon Hounsou as Shola, a sort of bodyguard/butler, as Vaughn describes him as. All shared the difficulties, both physically and technically, that they endured in putting together this ambitious period piece.





If the comparisons to other epic films wasn't obvious enough, Vaughn revealed that *The King's Man* is shot on the same lens as *Lawrence of Arabia*. One could imagine though, that the technology might not be up to speed in certain aspects, with the lens losing focus and "falling apart," amongst other problems. But action in camera was the key to this film, with Vaughn believing that too much was done through CG these days.

And this wasn't Vaughn's first rodeo with prequels in general—Vaughn reminded the audience that he had also helmed the fairly popular *X-Men: First Class*. The two films have some key differences, though: for one, Vaughn played with pre-existing characters, leaving less room to do unthinkable things (i.e. killing off Professor X, as a shocking, absurd example). With *The King's Man*, Vaughn had a fresh slate of characters to work with.

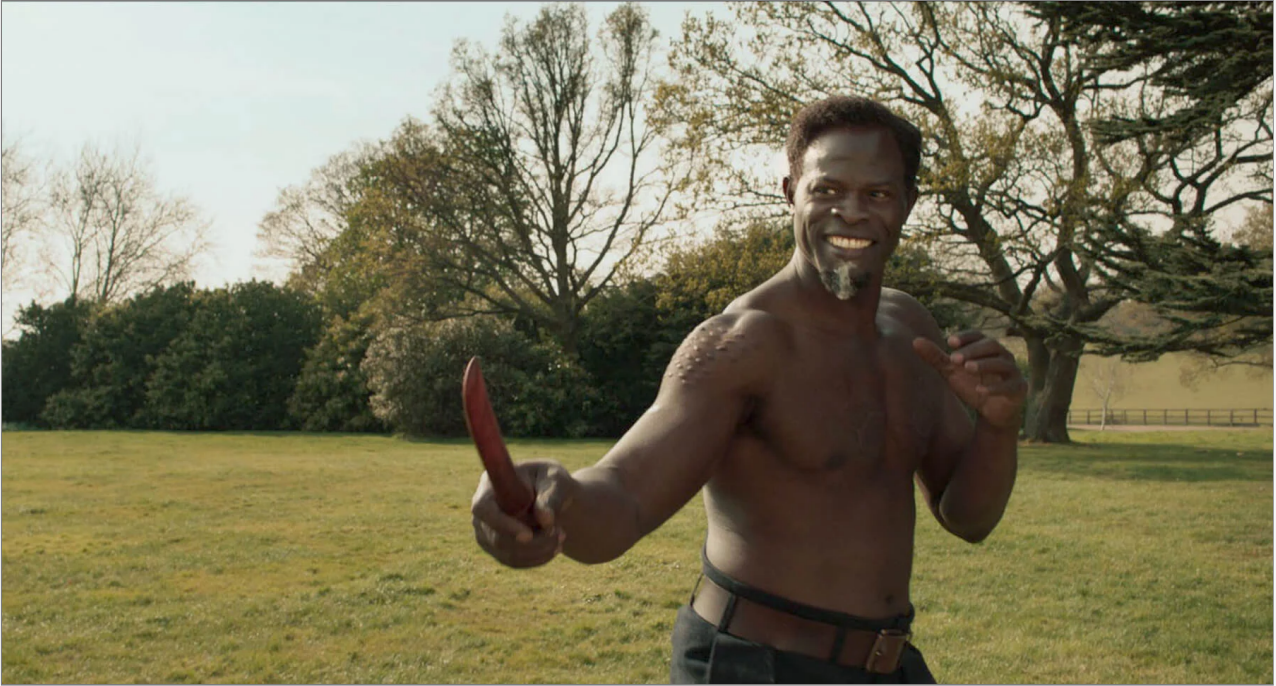
While *First Class* featured a number of allusions of movies past and fictional events yet to come, *The King's Man* has "hardly anything to do with the first films" other than the shared plot and setting element of a tailor shop. In fact, Vaughn believes that people who hated the first two *Kingsman* movies will "reluctantly like" this one. Exactly why isn't specified, but I'm assuming that it's the new epic World War I setting, and a quite different character dynamic.



Vaughn was joined by three stars from the film: Djimon Hounsou as Shola, Harris Dickinson as Conrad, and Ralph Fiennes himself as the Duke of Oxford. We were treated with a clip from the movie, featuring Duke and Conrad in the Kingsman tailor shop. In the clip, we learn that the two characters are father and son, and as Conrad inspects the fitting of his suit, his father relays to him the importance of being a gentleman. "We are Oxfords, not Brogues."

While *The Secret Service* and *The Golden Circle* had a figurative father and son dynamic with the Galahads Harry (Colin Firth) and Eggsy (Taron Egerton), the one between Fiennes and Dickinson is much more literal. Speaking about the lessons that the Duke of Oxford wants to convey to his son, the cast discussed a line from the film: "reputation is what people think of you and character is what you are."

At the heart of the film is an ideological conflict between father and son—tragedy has fell upon this family, and it gives both these family members a different perspective on warfare. Duke is more of a pacifist, while Conrad becomes more determined to "honor his nation"; both traits develop through the film, the cast promises. Conrad is "naive" and learns what it means to "be a man" as he reexamines a passion he doesn't know how to fulfill. Meanwhile, his father has a preexisting and "better" sense of morality.



As one can imagine, performing for a *Kingsman* film is a physically demanding and tolling gig, as Hounsou reminded the audience attending the panel. After going on a bit of a ramble, Vaughn interrupted and teased the actor about complaining on set. "This was a very painful film to make," Hounsou confessed. Vaughn was lucky to have the very observant Fiennes on set, almost acting like a co-director, according to the panel. But that pain was still felt by the other cast members; at one point, Dickinson had cut himself from a stunt, but continued filming.

Still, Hounsou said that he found the experience, his first with Vaughn, to be gratifying. His character Shola is a sort of bodyguard/butler, and it looks like he'll get plenty of action sequences to shine. Take the second clip shown off at the panel, which features a bonkers fight scene very much worthy of the *Kingsman* name.

With little context, Rasputin, who is totally in this film by the way (played by Rhys Ifans), has Duke on the ropes. Conrad and Shola burst into the highly decorative room and confront him; as Conrad assists his father, Shola engages in combat with the Russian mystic, with Ifans yelling in an over-the-top fashion and spinning on a table in what was practically a sword dance.



*The King's Man* appears to be familiar enough to fans of those first two films, while at the same time feeling distinct enough to be a standalone experience. *The Golden Circle* felt a bit like diminishing returns when I saw it back then, but going back in time may provide a surprisingly fresh breath of air.

I'll be most curious to see how it compares to *1917*, another World War I epic due to release this holiday season. With that film taking a more grounded and authentic approach to that conflict, with its **one shot wizardry** and whatnot, it'll be interesting to see two rather diametrically opposed films set in the same era releasing so close to one another. Our panel coverage for that film can be found through [this link](#).

Other than this film, 20th Century Fox also showed off *Free Guy* at their NYCC panel; our coverage of that panel segment is right [here](#). *The King's Man* will hit theaters in February 14, 2020, because nothing says Valentine's Day more than World War I and daddy issues. You can check out the latest trailer [here](#).



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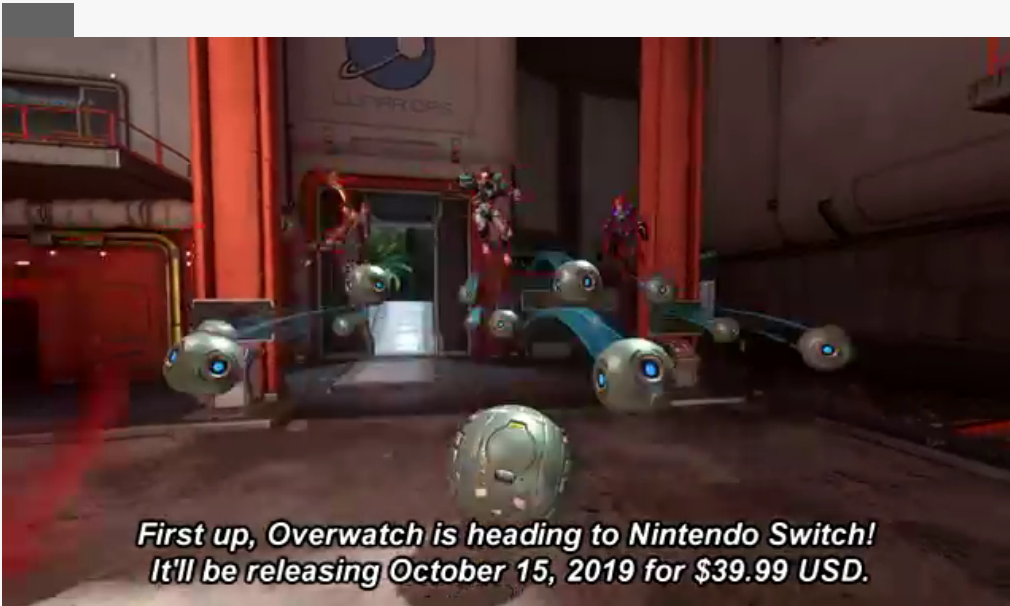
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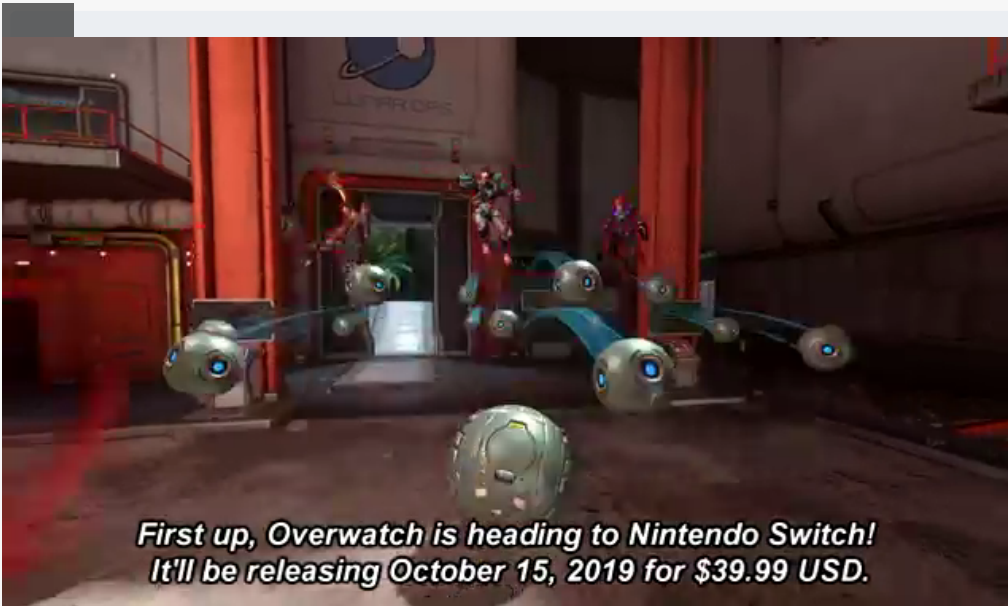
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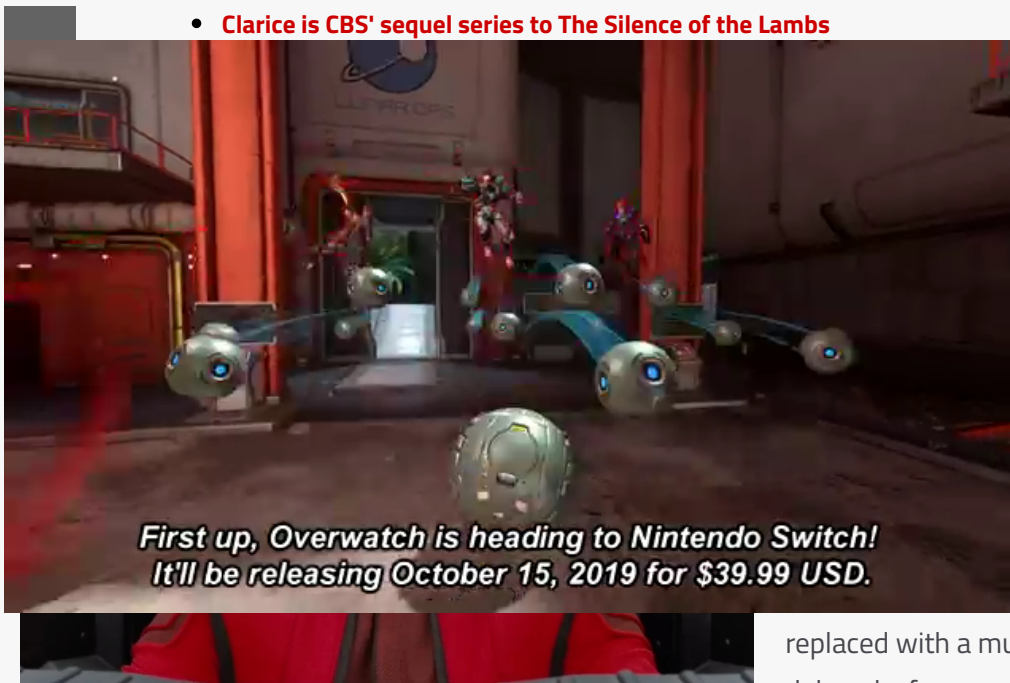
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would like to play again in a sequel

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...the Hedgehog movie has a lot of criticism by fans about the design of the lovable character. Although the design was eventually replaced with a much better one, the movie was delayed a few months because of it. However, the movie is finally coming out in a few short weeks. One of the main stars of the film, Jim Carrey, who plays Sonic's nemesis Dr. Robotnik, has gone on the record to say he would indeed love to reprise the role IF the film ever gets a sequel.

That does show promise in the film when a big star like Carrey is already signing himself on for a sequel to a film that hasn't even come out yet. Yes, the newly designed Sonic looks a heck of a lot better because they went back to the drawing board and listened to fans. Will the acting live up to the new graphics? That remains to be seen. Maybe Carrey will get his wish to don the mantle of Robotnik again if Sonic performs well at the box office.

*Sonic The Hedgehog* races into theaters on February 14, 2020.

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