



BFI ESCAPES ANNOUNCES OVER 100 FREE CINEMA SCREENINGS ACROSS THE UK FOR BAFTA-NOMINATED PRISON THRILLER 'WASTEMAN'

WASTEMAN STARS DAVID JONSSON (RYE LANE, INDUSTRY) AND TOM BLYTH (THE HUNGER GAMES, BENEDICTION)



The award-winning British prison thriller will preview four days before general release at over 100 independent cinemas across the UK

WASTEMAN
16-17 February 2026

Free tickets available in over **100** locations

[Images](#)

[Film Trailer](#)

Escapes, the nationwide initiative designed to make cinema more accessible to all by hosting free cinema screenings across the UK each month, has announced its next film preview: BAFTA-nominated British prison thriller **WASTEMAN**.

On the 16th and 17th February 2026 audiences in over 100 locations across the UK can claim free cinema tickets via Escapes.

WASTEMAN follows prisoner Taylor (David Jonsson) who is approaching parole. Taylor wants nothing more than to be a dad to his son who he's never met. In a world of drugs, parties, gangs, and violence, so far, he's managed to keep out of trouble. However, when violent new cellmate Dee (Tom Blyth) arrives, the chance for Taylor to get his life back is put in jeopardy.

WASTEMAN brutally depicts the state of UK prisons: drugs, gangs, overcrowding, riots, and ruthless violence pulsate through the film.

David Jonsson, who stars as Taylor, is becoming one of the leading British actors of his generation. In 2025, Jonsson won the BAFTA Rising Star Award and was nominated for a BIFA for his leading role in WASTEMAN. A 2022 GQ Man of the Year, the actor is best known for his performances in Ridley Scott's ALIEN: ROMULUS, breakout UK hit RYE LANE and hit BBC/HBO series INDUSTRY. Before his screen breakthrough, Jonsson's early theatre performances opposite the likes of David Tennant won him a Black British Theatre Award.

Starring opposite as cellmate Dee is **Tom Blyth**. The acclaimed actor is best known for performances in THE HUNGER GAMES: BALLAD OF SONGBIRDS AND SNAKES, BENEDICTION, and Netflix's PEOPLE WE MET ON VACATION.

WASTEMAN is the debut film from director **Cal McCau**. The director was inspired after coming across footage recorded by prisoners on phones they'd smuggled inside: *"It was raw, unfiltered, and terrifying—a visceral view of a world that felt more alien than any prison depiction I'd encountered before."*

McCau continues: *"In these brief, shocking glimpses, I saw not only the desperation but also the brutal truth of a system failing those it was supposed to rehabilitate. We can ignore these spaces, but in doing so, we dehumanise people and foster an environment where reoffending is almost inevitable."*

McCau won Best Debut Director at the British Independent Film Awards 2025 for WASTEMAN.

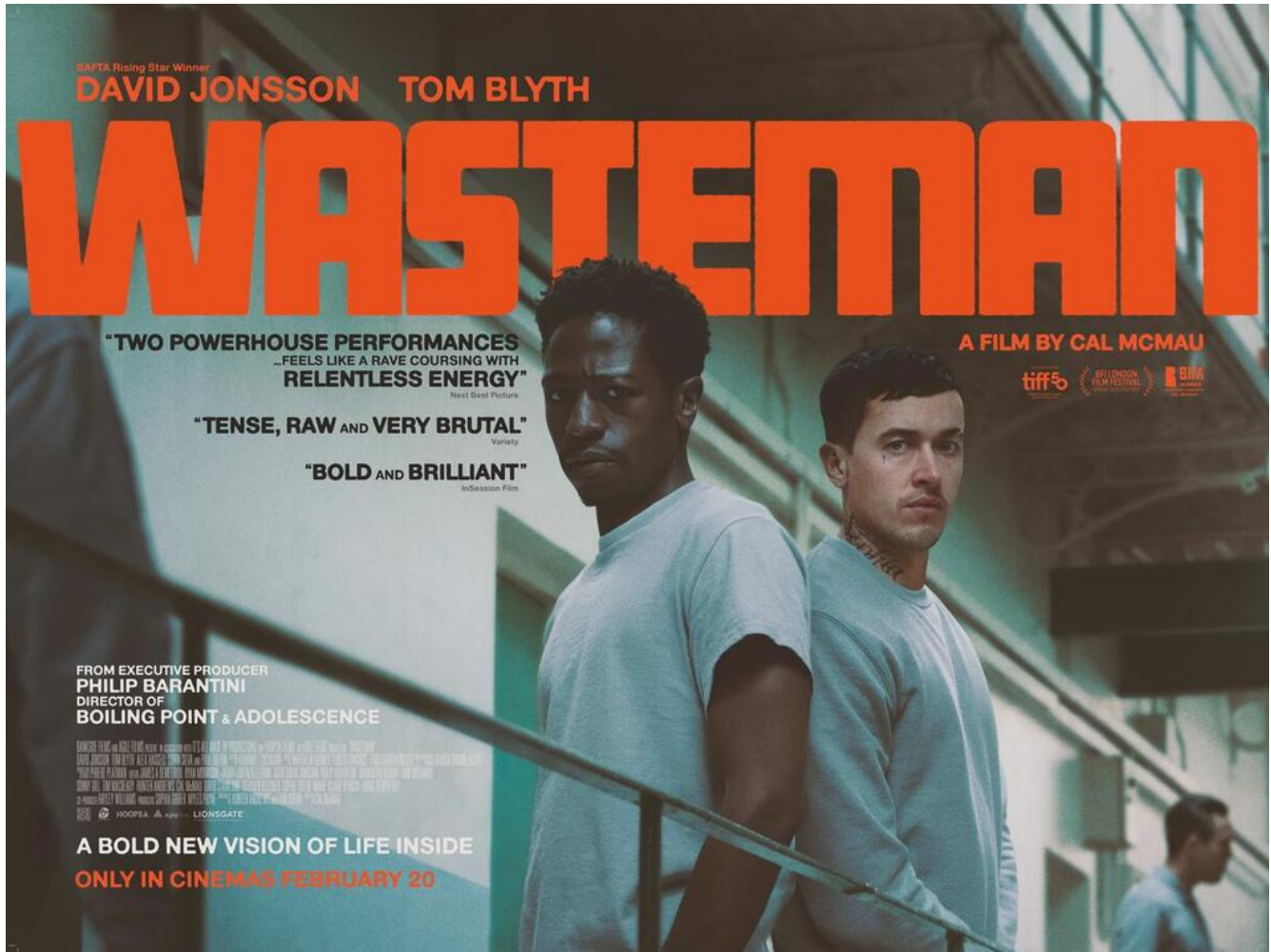
British R&B artist Ray BLK plays the prison psychiatrist Best known for collaborations with Stormzy, Giggs, Gorillaz, Nines, Chip, and touring with Nicki Minaj, the MOBO-nominated singer-songwriter is now becoming a rising star of the screen. In 2023, the Londoner made her acting debut in hit BBC series CHAMPION and will soon join the cast of Paramount+'s THE AGENCY.

Alex Hassell, who plays Rupert Campbell-Black in hit Disney+/Hulu Dame Jilly Cooper adaption RIVALRS, also stars in WASTEMAN as prisoner Paul who is Dee's prison archnemesis.

WASTEMAN premiered at the **Toronto International Film Festival**, followed by a UK premiere at the **BFI London Film Festival**. WASTEMAN is written by Hunter Andrews and Eoin Doran and produced by Sophia Gibber and Myles

Pane. Executive producers include David Jonsson and Philip Barantii, the director of Netflix's ADOLESCENCE and BBC's BOILING POINT.

Escapes is a nationwide initiative supported by the BFI awarding National Lottery funding. Escapes celebrates independent cinemas and drives new audiences to local venues in a mission to bring cinema to every community in the UK.



"A prison film for the social media generation."

Time Out

"One of this year's most intense British thrillers."

GRM Daily

"Wasteman shows a prison life rarely seen on screen. Tense, raw, and very brutal."

Variety

"Tom Blyth's performance is of animal intensity."

Radio Times

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About Escapes

Escapes is a nationwide initiative supported by the BFI awarding National Lottery funding, on a mission to bring cinema to all. Through free screenings at over 150 independent cinemas across the UK, Escapes provides an opportunity for new and returning audiences to discover the magic of cinema. Whether it's a blockbuster, an indie gem, or a cult classic like *Point Break*, Escapes is committed to engaging local communities and breaking down barriers to cinema-going.

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Our mission is:

To support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers

To grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television archive

To offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals - delivered online and in venue

To use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding

To work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

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