

15th September 2025

An open letter:

Misrepresentation of Anaphylaxis in The Roses – A Serious Concern from the Allergic Community

Jay Roach, Michelle Graham, p.g.a., Adam Ackland, p.g.a., Leah Clarke, p.g.a., Ed Sinclair, p.g.a., Tom Carver

Searchlight

3 Queen Caroline Street,
Hammersmith,
London, W6 9PE

Dear Producers of The Roses,

As The Roses reaches our screens, many were excited to see talents like Olivia Colman and Benedict Cumberbatch together for your film. But for our community, those living with allergy, the film has been distressing.

As charities and organisations supporting people with allergy, we've been contacted by members of our community who were horrified by how anaphylaxis was portrayed in your film. Not only was a severe allergic reaction used as a plot device, but it was also deliberately triggered by another character and then responded to in a dangerously incorrect way.

Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening medical emergency. Every year, sadly lives are lost due to delayed treatment or misunderstanding of how to respond. Your portrayal risks reinforcing dangerous myths.

What went wrong in The Roses:

- A character is deliberately exposed to an allergen, a scenario that is terrifyingly real for many people.
- The Adrenaline Auto-Injector (AAI) is administered incorrectly in the arm, not the correct site, which is the outer thigh.
- There is no call to emergency services, and no follow-up medical treatment.

In reality, if someone is showing signs of anaphylaxis:

1. Administer an AAI immediately using the AAI pen's instructions into the outer thigh.
2. Call 999 and say "anaphylaxis" (ana-fill-axis).
3. Stay with the person, make sure they are lying flat with legs raised, if breathing is difficult allow to sit with legs raised. Do not stand the person up.
4. Be ready to give a second AAI if needed.



Why this matters:

Allergies are on the rise. By 2026, 1 in 2 people in Europe are expected to live with some form of allergy. An estimated 4.2 million people in the UK are at risk of anaphylaxis, with common triggers including foods like peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish (all food can be a trigger), insect stings and medications.

Beyond the physical danger, living with allergy brings daily anxiety, fear, and often isolation. Our community constantly faces the emotional toll of not being taken seriously. Misrepresentations like this in film do not just hurt, they reinforce the idea that allergy is an inconvenience rather than a chronic health condition that can kill in minutes.

Films like yours hold power.

They shape how people see themselves and how others treat them. You have a platform that can inform and educate as well as entertain. With that comes responsibility.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with your team to discuss how we can work together to portray allergy and anaphylaxis accurately and respectfully. Together, we can ensure that future stories help protect lives, not endanger them.

Yours sincerely,

Simone Miles, Chief Executive, Allergy UK

Simon Williams, Chief Executive, Anaphylaxis UK

Sarah Knight, Founder and CEO, The Allergy Team

Signed and supported by:



allergy_uk



allergyuk



allergy-uk

