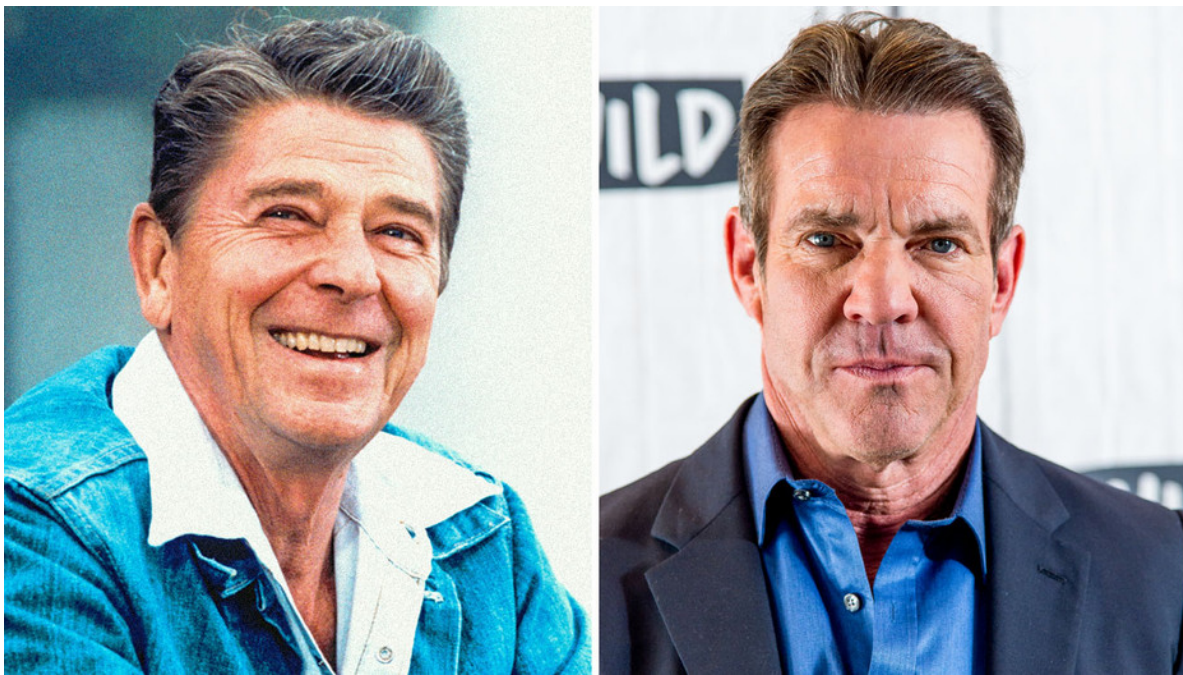


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Dennis Quaid to Play Ronald Reagan in New Biopic

Paul Bond

3-4 minutes



Left, Photofest; Right, Roy Rochlin/Getty Images

Mark Joseph, who is producing the biopic, met with 50 of the former president's friends, confidantes and cabinet members, including his pastor and the surgeon who saved his life after he was shot.

Dennis Quaid has inked a deal to play President Ronald Reagan in a film expected to begin shooting in the fall, *The Hollywood*

Reporter has confirmed.

The long-in-the-works feature film will explore Reagan's life from boyhood through his presidency — of both the U.S. and the Screen Actors Guild — and he will be played as a young man by David Henrie, best known for his role as teen Justin Russo in the kid's show *Wizards of Waverly Place*, and as an older adult by Quaid.

The film is also expected to explore Reagan's time as governor of California, his role in the destruction of the Berlin Wall and his final days dealing with Alzheimer's disease. It will also delve a bit into John Hinckley Jr., whose obsession with actress Jodie Foster led to his attempted assassination of the Republican president in 1981.

Jon Voight also has a role in the film, which is produced by Mark Joseph, who associate-produced *Max Rose*, the last film to star legendary comedian Jerry Lewis. The movie, dubbed *Reagan*, is also produced by Ralph Winter, best known for the *X-Men* film franchise.

Joseph told *THR* that he has met with 50 of Reagan's friends, confidantes and cabinet members, including his pastor and the surgeon who saved his life after Hinckley Jr. shot him, in order to accurately portray the details of his life.

"Dennis was always our first choice. He's one of the great actors of our time," Joseph said.

"Reagan was a fascinating and multifaceted human being and this movie captures his humanity," Quaid said. "We're making a movie for Republicans and Democrats alike since Reagan transcends politics. I can't wait to get started."

Megyn Kelly is planning to interview Quaid at the Reagan Ranch in Santa Barbara soon for her NBC show where she will ask about his decision to play the 40th U.S. president, according to sources.

The \$21 million film will be directed by Sean McNamara, who recently directed *The Miracle Season*, an inspirational sports drama starring Erin Moriarty, Helen Hunt and William Hurt. He also directed *Soul Surfer* in 2011 and several shows for Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel.

The filmmakers say they are aiming for a summer 2019 release for *Reagan*, which was written by Howie Klausner and is based on two biographies from author Paul Kengor.

Quaid, 64, is finishing the second season of *Fortitude*, a psychological thriller on Amazon, and he's coming off of *I Can Only Imagine*, a Christian film that has so far earned \$83 million on just a \$7 million production budget.

Edwin Meese, who worked for Reagan in a variety of ways for a few decades, ultimately rising to U.S. attorney general, is an unofficial adviser on the movie.

Quaid's deal to play Reagan was negotiated by attorney Frank DeMartini, Stewart Brookman of Hansen Jacobson and George Freeman at WME.

