



Film Review



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Film Review: The Dangerous Cowboy from Washington

by **Dani Maurer**

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Rubbing shoulders with the Iron Lady © Adkins Entertainment

Retired ex-KGB agent Viktor Petrovich (Jon Voight) receives a visit from a young man. The visitor questions him about a person the secret service had particularly in their sights during the Cold War: Ronald Reagan (Dennis Quaid). Early on, Petrovich had reported to his comrades about this man, who grew up in modest circumstances in a small town in Illinois and forged a career in Hollywood as a young man. Reagan developed a strong sense of justice early in life, which he lived out as president of the actors' union. That he would one day find his place in politics was something his supporters had probably hoped for rather than expected.



The American Dream... Couple. © Adkins Entertainment

However, Reagan combined wit and cleverness, emerging as a crucial figure in the fight against Russian communism, which threatened to infiltrate the Western world. Together with his wife Nancy (Penelope Ann Miller), Reagan became a charismatic President of the United States, but had to overcome profound crises during his term in office: for instance, the scandal surrounding arms shipments to Iran and the reduction of nuclear weapons in partnership with Michail Gorbatschow (Olek Kupkra), whom he urged in 1987, in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, to «tear down this wall».

With this political biopic, you have to turn a blind eye every so often. Nevertheless, **Reagan** is a beautiful, calm, and fascinating film. Somewhere between cracking jokes and eating jelly beans, this cowboy had to lead a country that, on more than one occasion, stood on the brink of disaster.

Whether it is **Lincoln**, **Nixon**, or George **W.** Bush: American presidents and their exciting lives between the Oval Office and minor private scandals are wonderfully suited to dramatic and thrilling biopics. The newest member of this club is Ronald Reagan, portrayed here by Dennis Quaid. The film takes us back to the era of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and a Hollywood career that most certainly could have been more successful.

However, in **Reagan**, director Sean McNamara (**Soul Surfer**) does not have the protagonist tell his own story, but instead sets up a small framing narrative featuring a former KGB agent who had kept his eye on this cowboy for quite some time. What follows over the next two hours is a lovely history lesson, featuring quite a few glimpses behind the scenes, but also a great deal of respect and reverence for its subject. While the film does touch upon criticisms and mistakes surrounding Ronald Reagan, it brushes past them rather swiftly.

Along the way, we repeatedly encounter familiar faces portraying key figures in the career of the 40th US President: ranging from Mena Suvari, Robert Davi (almost unrecognisable as Leonid Brezhnev), and Kevin Dillon, right through to Kevin Sorbo. The latter plays a reverend who seems to have had a quite significant influence on the young Reagan. They are all well cast in their roles, but they leave the main stage to the pairing of Dennis Quaid and Penelope Ann Miller, whose closeness and intimate connection as Ronald and Nancy Reagan are absolutely convincing at all times.





Dani Maurer Muri has been OutNow's Methuselah since 2002. He likes (almost) everything from Disney, animation in general, and monster movies. Additionally, he loves adventures from distant worlds, star wars, and even intelligent cinema. Only with rom-coms does he start to groan. Although, in IMAX, he even watches those!

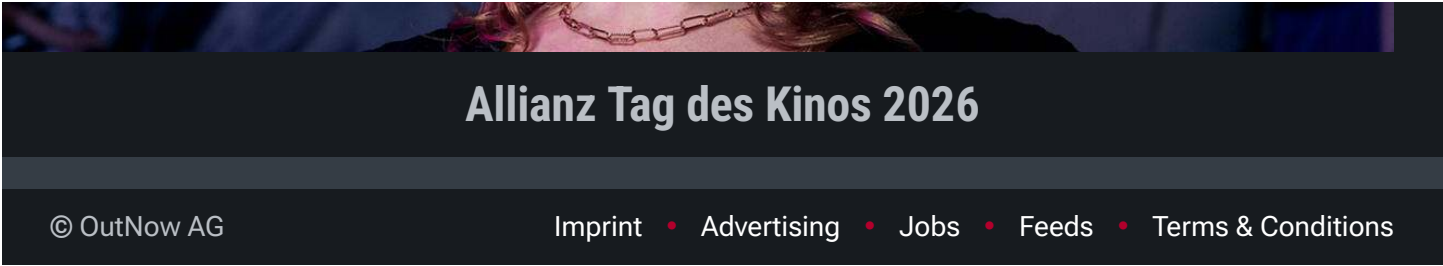
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