

Ronald Reagan Movie Beats Box Office Expectations - Newsweek

Reader-mode archive 2026-08-30 · <https://www.newsweek.com/ronald-reagan-movie-beats-box-office-expectations-1947469>

While Reagan , Sean McNamara's new movie, has received largely negative reviews from critics, it has beaten box office expectations during its first weekend, ranking No. 4 on the charts.

The Ronald Reagan biopic, which depicts the life of the actor and politician, stars Dennis Quaid as the 40th president and Penelope Ann Miller as Nancy Reagan. The film is loosely based on *The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism* , a 2006 book written by Paul Kengor.

Reagan tells the story of its subject from his childhood through his acting career—with a focus on his struggle against communists in Hollywood—and finally to the White House. Much of the narrative is given by actor Jon Voight, who plays a fictional retired KGB officer who holds Reagan responsible for the Soviet Union's collapse.

The film had its cinematic release on Friday, and over Labor Day weekend, it was the only new release competitive with holdover films that opened earlier this summer. It earned \$7.4 million Friday through Sunday, with an estimated cumulative total of \$9.2 million, including projections for Monday.

Newsweek contacted a spokesperson for McNamara for comment via email outside normal working hours.

Citing Comscore's estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, the Associated Press reported that *Deadpool & Wolverine* sits at No. 1, raking in \$15.2 million. *Alien: Romulus* comes in second place with \$9.3 million, and *It Ends With Us* is third with \$7.4 million. Reagan sits in fourth place with \$7.4 million. Fifth-place *Twisters* earned slightly less, receiving \$7.2 million.

The total domestic summer box office revenue exceeded \$3.6 billion. The summer movie season runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Audiences have reacted positively to Reagan . At the time of writing, it had a 98 percent audience score on Rotten Tomatoes based on more than 1,000 reviews.

"Oscar-winning performances for Quaid, Voight, and Miller in this heartfelt biopic that pays homage to one of America's most beloved, admired, and effective Presidents. Standing ovation in a packed theater shows how the audience really loved the subject matter and film," one reviewer wrote.

Another added, "It is action packed and a great film for anyone who lived during the Reagan years."

Critics, however, have been less receptive . Writing in The Boston Globe , Odie Henderson called Reagan "the worst kind of hagiography" and "a wretched 2½ -hour bore that's uncurious about its subject." Henderson accused the film of having leaned "heavily into the myth of Saint Ronnie," adding, "I don't think Reagan himself could have saved this execrable, poorly made movie."

The Daily Beast 's Nick Schager called Reagan "the worst movie of the year," adding, "You may have suspected that this MAGA-tinged hagiography would be absolute trash, but it turns out you didn't think low enough."

In The Chicago Sun Times , Richard Roeper wrote that "while someday, somebody might make a great movie or streaming series that truly and thoroughly explores the complexities of the uniquely American story of Ronald Reagan, it has not yet happened."

The film sparked controversy even before its release, with Quaid telling Newsweek that Facebook was "throttling advertising and promotion " of Reagan . Facebook told Newsweek it may have been a mistake.

"Facebook is once again censoring the free flow of ideas, deciding what's best for us to see and hear; only this time it's throttling advertising and promotion for my movie about Ronald Reagan," the actor said via an email sent exclusively to Newsweek .

Quaid's remarks coincided with a letter addressed to Mark Zuckerberg , the chairman and CEO of Facebook's parent company, Meta Platforms, that outlined "numerous problems" marketers said they'd had when trying to post or "boost" content related to Reagan .

Eric McClellan, the film's director of digital marketing, wrote the letter, saying that the most "egregious" example involved a post that contained the title of the movie, an image of Quaid and a quote from the 40th president.

"Don't let anyone tell you that America's best days are behind her—that the American spirit has been vanquished," the quote said. "We've seen it triumph too often in our lives not to believe it now."

Facebook allowed the post but refused to let the marketers "boost" it by way of a paid advertisement, McClellan said in the letter.