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Fool's Paradise (2023 film)

Fool's Paradise is a 2023 American satirical comedy film written and directed by Charlie Day in his directorial debut. The film stars Charlie Day, Ken Jeong, Kate Beckinsale, Adrien Brody, Jason Sudeikis, Edie Falco, Jason Bateman, Common, Ray Liotta, and John Malkovich.


The film tells the story of a down-on-his-luck publicist, who gets his lucky break when he discovers a mute man, recently released from a mental health facility, who looks just like a method actor that refuses to leave his trailer.^[2]

Plot

A mute John Doe with the mental capacity of a five-year-old is ejected from a mental hospital when the state cannot afford his treatment. He begins living on the streets and taking direction from whomever he comes across. While making a biopic about Billy the Kid, a Producer is incensed that method actor Sir Tom Bingsley refuses to leave his trailer. Since this costs the film time and money, the Producer resorts to using a stand-in. He sees the John Doe selling oranges on the street and hires him due to the striking resemblance to Bingsley.

Meanwhile, Lenny is a struggling publicist who has not been able to maintain one client since moving to L.A. and bribes his way onto studio lots to look for talent. Lenny sees John Doe filming the biopic and misunderstands his name to be "Latte Pronto" due to the Producer demanding coffee. After Bingsley dies in a method acting technique of hanging himself, "Billy the Kid" is forced to continue filming with Pronto as the star. Although hindered by Pronto's lack of acting talent and his continued looks to camera, his co-stars Christiana Dior and Chad Luxt are inspired by the supposed avant-garde performance and emulate his acting style.

Lenny plans to propel Latte Pronto into stardom by getting him an agent and representation. Pronto is befriended by Luxt taking him to parties and showing him the Hollywood lifestyle. Simultaneously, Dior becomes infatuated with Pronto due to his sincerity. Dior convinces Pronto to marry her and they adopt children, increasing their profiles in the media. "Billy the Kid" is a success, with critics praising Pronto's performance of breaking the fourth wall by looking into the camera.

<i>Fool's Paradise</i>	
	
Theatrical release poster	
Directed by	<u>Charlie Day</u>
Written by	<u>Charlie Day</u>
Produced by	<u>John Rickard</u> <u>Chris Lemole</u> <u>Tim Zajaros</u> <u>Alex Saks</u>
Starring	<u>Charlie Day</u> <u>Ken Jeong</u> <u>Kate Beckinsale</u> <u>Adrien Brody</u> <u>Jason Sudeikis</u> <u>Edie Falco</u> <u>Jason Bateman</u> <u>Common</u> <u>Ray Liotta</u> <u>John Malkovich</u>
Cinematography	<u>Nico Aguilar</u>
Edited by	<u>Tim Roche</u>

At the after party, Lenny asks Pronto to confirm they will never end their business relationship. When Pronto cannot respond to Lenny's request, a security guard tries to escort Lenny out for disrupting the party. A fight breaks out with Pronto being blamed and sued by the security guard. The Agent asks Pronto to lay low from the media, while informing him of an offer to star in "Mosquito Boy" directed by Lex Tanner.

While filming "Mosquito Boy", Pronto is taken out by Luxt for a night on the town. Luxt, who collects gold, eventually gifts Pronto a piece of gold. Paparazzo interrupts their conversation and a fight ensues, which ends with the two in jail. Despite Luxt being the aggressor, Pronto is blamed in the media. This further strains his relationship with his representation. While filming, Pronto is injured and a stand-in is used for most of the movie. Lenny promises to publicize the film into a hit regardless. The movie is a failure at the box office and Pronto's representation leaves him. Frustrated with Pronto's failing stardom and controversies, Dior divorces him, takes the children, and begins dating Luxt.

Pronto is forced to move in with Lenny and the two bond over their mutual hardships. Lenny has a heart attack following his consumption of dozens of energy drinks. Pronto stays by his hospital bedside but leaves the room when a fan wants a selfie. Due to a mix-up with a nurse and a deceased patient, Pronto believes Lenny died while Lenny believes Pronto abandoned him. Lenny resolves to become a better person and successful publicist. Meanwhile, Pronto goes back to living on the street. Pronto befriends Dagger, a homeless man, and saves his life, gaining media acclaim and is awarded the Key to the City by the Mayor of Los Angeles.

The Mayor encourages Pronto to run for office on an anti-corporate platform since his acting career is over. The rich and powerful Cote brothers have Pronto kidnapped to discourage his political career. Ed Cote threatens his life should he oppose any of the Cotes' business interests. In return for abandoning politics, Ed Cote arranges for Latte to get his representation back (minus Lenny) and another chance at a movie career. Disillusioned with filmmaking, Pronto abandons his representation and wanders the streets aimlessly. Lenny sees Pronto and chases after him. Lenny apologizes for using his friend as a meal ticket and tells Pronto he loves him. Saying his first words, Pronto responds, "I love you too" and gives Lenny his piece of gold. Lenny assumes it is fake and throws it in a fountain. The two leave to get dinner together and catch up.

Cast

- Charlie Day as Latte Pronto
- Ken Jeong as Lenny the publicist
- Kate Beckinsale as Christiana Dior
- Adrien Brody as Chad Luxt
- Jason Sudeikis as Lex Tanner
- Ray Liotta as the producer
- Steve Coulter as Tony London
- Jason Bateman as a SPFX tech
- Edie Falco as the agent

	<u>Leslie Jones</u>
Music by	<u>Jon Brion</u>
Production companies	Armory Films Wrigley Pictures
Distributed by	<u>Roadside Attractions</u>
Release date	May 12, 2023
Running time	97 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	\$885,712 ^[1]

- Mary Elizabeth Ellis as makeup woman #1
- Drew Droege as a male hairdresser
- Artemis Pebdani as makeup woman #2
- Jimmi Simpson as talk show host
- Lance Barber as side kick
- Dean Norris as studio head
- Glenn Howerton as a business manager
- Common as the dagger
- Jillian Bell as Shaman
- Katherine McNamara as Terry
- John Malkovich as Ed Cote
- Alanna Ubach as a pornography actress
- David Hornsby as a pilot
- Edy Ganem as the daughter (uncredited)^[3]

Production

It was announced in September 2018 that Charlie Day was set to make his directorial debut on the film *El Tonto*, in addition to writing and starring in it.^[4] The additions of Kate Beckinsale, Jason Sudeikis, Edie Falco, John Malkovich and Jillian Bell to the cast were announced the following month.^[5] In October 2018, Ray Liotta (in one of his final roles), Ken Jeong, Adrien Brody, Travis Fimmel, Dean Norris and Edy Ganem were added to the cast.^{[6][7]} In November 2018, it was announced that Katherine McNamara, Common, Mary Elizabeth Ellis, and Glenn Howerton had joined the cast.^{[8][9]}

Principal photography began in October 2018 in Los Angeles.^[10] In February 2022, Day revealed in an interview that the film had undergone a week of reshoots in December 2021 with Jeong, Brody, Beckinsale, and Liotta after he wrote an additional 27 pages to the screenplay based on the advice of filmmaker Guillermo del Toro, who also suggested the film's initial title of *El Tonto* be discarded.^[11] The film was later retitled *Fool's Paradise*.^[2]

Release

Fool's Paradise had its world premiere on May 9, 2023,^[12] and was released theatrically on May 12, 2023, by Roadside Attractions in the United States.^[13] Lionsgate will distribute on home media.^[2]

The film was released for digital platforms on June 2, 2023, followed by a Blu-ray and DVD release on July 18, 2023.^[14]

Reception

Box office

In the United States and Canada, *Fool's Paradise* was released alongside *Blackberry* and *Hypnotic*. The film made \$464,259 in its first weekend.^[15]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 18% of 45 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 4.3/10. The website's consensus reads: "*Fool's Paradise* suggests Charlie Day may have a bright future as a director, but he'll need to find smarter and more consistently funny scripts."^[16] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 27 out of 100, based on 9 critics, indicating "generally unfavorable" reviews.^[17]

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External links

- *Fool's Paradise* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9013340/>) at IMDb
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