

Dream Scenario

Dream Scenario is a 2023 American black comedy fantasy film written and directed by Norwegian filmmaker Kristoffer Borgli. It is produced by Ari Aster and Lars Knudsen under their Square Peg banner, alongside Nicolas Cage, Jacob Jaffke, and Tyler Campellone. It stars Cage, Julianne Nicholson, Michael Cera, Tim Meadows, Dylan Gelula and Dylan Baker. Cage plays Paul Matthews, a mild-mannered evolutionary biology professor who begins appearing in the dreams of others.

Dream Scenario premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 9, 2023 and began a limited theatrical release by A24 on November 10, 2023, before expanding on November 22. It received positive reviews and was nominated for awards including a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor – Motion Picture Musical or Comedy for Nicolas Cage.

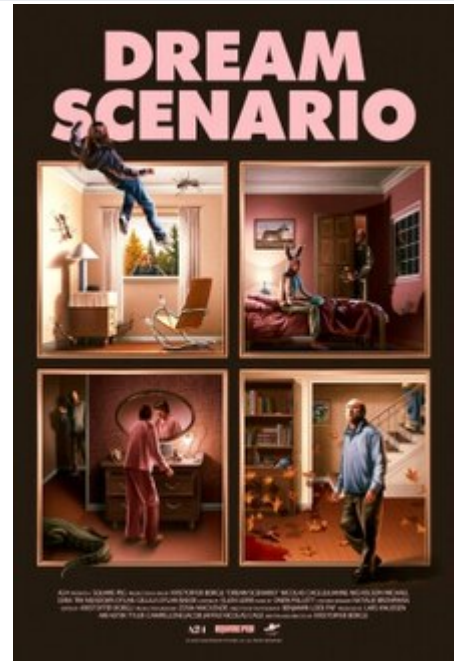
Plot

Sophie, a teenage girl, has a dream in which a man is raking leaves by a swimming pool. As Sophie starts floating up to the sky, she cries for help from this man whom she calls Dad. Her father, Paul Matthews, is a professor of evolutionary biology at a local university.

When Paul learns a former colleague is writing an article on a topic he had many years earlier discussed with her, he seeks to confront her but instead begs her for some recognition. Paul's journalist ex-girlfriend, Claire, spots him with his wife, Janet, and tells him he appears in her dreams. With his permission, she writes an article about the experience. Soon, hundreds of strangers come forward as recognizing Paul from their dreams. While Paul enjoys the media coverage this brings, he is frustrated by his depiction in the dreams as passive and uninteresting. In impromptu interviews with some of his students, Paul learns that in the dreams, often times calamity occurs or the dreamers ask for help, but Paul is passive or emotionless and does not intervene.

Paul's wife, Janet, asks why he does not appear in her dreams. She describes her fantasy: Paul rescues her while wearing the oversized suit worn by David Byrne in the 1984 concert film

Dream Scenario



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	<u>Kristoffer Borgli</u>
Written by	<u>Kristoffer Borgli</u>
Produced by	<u>Lars Knudsen</u> <u>Ari Aster</u> Tyler Campellone Jacob Jaffke <u>Nicolas Cage</u>
Starring	<u>Nicolas Cage</u> <u>Julianne Nicholson</u> <u>Michael Cera</u> <u>Tim Meadows</u> <u>Dylan Gelula</u> <u>Dylan Baker</u>
Cinematography	<u>Benjamin Loeb</u>
Edited by	<u>Kristoffer Borgli</u>
Music by	<u>Owen Pallett</u>
Production companies	<u>A24</u> Square Peg <u>Saturn Films</u>

Stop Making Sense. Later that evening, a mentally ill man who has seen Paul in his dreams breaks into their house with a knife, raising concerns about the risks of his fame.

Paul meets with a public relations firm, hoping to get a book deal, but they attempt to convince him to advertise Sprite on social media. After an assistant at the firm tells him about her erotic dreams about him, he attempts to reenact them for her, but he suffers premature ejaculation and flatulence, and he leaves, humiliated.

Paul is enraged to learn that the former colleague has published a high-profile paper on the subject he was thinking of writing his book about. His presence in people's dreams becomes violent and sadistic, and he becomes vilified. He is placed on leave after students refuse to attend his classes. Bystanders begin to notice Paul in public and are bothered by his presence, resulting in a brawl in a diner. After Janet's career is affected, she asks Paul to make a public apology, but he angrily refuses.

After Paul has a nightmare in which he is hunted and killed by a version of himself wielding a crossbow, he releases a self-pitying apology video. Humiliated, Janet throws him out of the house. Paul forces his way into his daughter's school play, but accidentally injures a teacher in the process and is restrained. He becomes further vilified.

Some time later, the dreams have stopped. Paul's dream experience led to the discovery of a shared subconsciousness, and dreams have become an advertising space through the use of technology. Janet is separated from Paul and is dating a co-worker. Paul travels to France for a book tour to promote his book *Dream Scenario*. He learns it has been retitled *Je suis ton cauchemar* ("I Am Your Nightmare") without his consent, that the book is pitifully thin in the translated volume, and that his signing event has been moved to the dingy basement of the bookstore. Nevertheless, fans line up for his signed copies. Paul uses dream-travel technology to attempt entering one of Janet's dreams and rescue her while wearing the Byrne suit. As he floats away, much like how Sophie did in the very first dream, Paul declares that he wishes the dream was reality.

Distributed by	A24
Release dates	September 9, 2023 (TIFF) November 10, 2023 (United States)
Running time	102 minutes ^[1]
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	\$12.4 million ^[2]

Cast

- Nicolas Cage as Paul Matthews, a college professor^[3]
- Julianne Nicholson as Janet Matthews, Paul's wife
- Michael Cera as Trent, the head of a viral marketing firm
- Tim Meadows as Brett, the dean of Paul's college
- Dylan Gelula as Molly, Trent's assistant
- Dylan Baker as Richard, a colleague of Paul
- Kate Berlant as Mary, Trent's business partner
- Lily Bird as Sophie Matthews, Paul's daughter
- Jessica Clement as Hannah Matthews, Paul's daughter
- David Klein as Andy, Paul's student
- Cara Volchoff as Candice, a therapist
- Noah Centineo as Dylan

- [Nicholas Braun](#) as Brian Berg
- [Amber Midthunder](#) as Haley
- [Lily Gao](#) as Realtor

Production

[A24](#) announced the film in August 2022,^[4] with [Nicolas Cage](#), [Julianne Nicholson](#), [Michael Cera](#), [Tim Meadows](#), [Kate Berlant](#), [Dylan Baker](#) and [Dylan Gelula](#) to be included in the cast.^[5]

[Principal photography](#) commenced in [Toronto](#) in October 2022 and [wrapped](#) that November.^{[6][7]}

The movie was shot on analogue [16 mm](#) (Super 16) film with the [Arriflex 416 Plus](#) camera before being transferred to a [4k digital intermediate](#) in [postproduction](#).^[8]

Release

Dream Scenario premiered as the opening film in the [Platform Prize](#) program at the [Toronto International Film Festival](#) on September 9, 2023.^{[9][10][11]} [A24](#) distributed it in the United States with a limited release on November 10, 2023, followed by an expanded release on November 22.^{[12][5]} Distribution in Canada, New Zealand and Australia was handled by [VVS Films](#).^[13]

Reception

Critical reception

On the [review aggregator](#) website [Rotten Tomatoes](#), 91% of 233 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 7.5/10. The website's consensus reads: "Come to *Dream Scenario* for career-highlight work from Nicolas Cage—and leave mulling over everything it has to say about pop culture's fickle whims."^[14] [Metacritic](#), which uses a [weighted average](#), assigned the film a score of 74 out of 100, based on 47 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.^[15]

[Kyle Smith](#) of *The Wall Street Journal* called the film "a bold statement that is bound to make a name" for Borgli.^[16] [Peter Bradshaw](#), in his review of the film in *The Guardian*, called it "very enjoyable" and a "smart film about the uncanny experience of fame."^[17] [Peter Debruge](#) of *Variety* noted that "Borgli shoots the dreams no different from the waking moments, creating a kind of mind game for audiences, who must determine at any given moment whether the scene in question is real or imagined."^[18]



Dream Scenario premiering at the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival

Jeannette Catsoulis of *The New York Times* wrote that the film is "often funny and frequently surreal" but said that Borgli had "more ideas than space to execute them," leading to a third act that feels "overloaded and indecisive of where it wants to land." Catsoulis also wrote that the erotic scene between Paul and Molly "could make you want to put your eyes out."^[19]

Accolades

Awards and nominations for *Dream Scenario*

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Nominee(s)	Result	Ref.
<u>Critics' Choice Super Awards</u>	<u>April 4, 2024</u>	Best Actor in a Horror Movie	<u>Nicolas Cage</u>	Won	^[20]
<u>Golden Globe Awards</u>	<u>January 7, 2024</u>	<u>Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy</u>		Nominated	
<u>Satellite Awards</u>	<u>February 18, 2024</u>	<u>Best Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical</u>	<i>Dream Scenario</i>	Nominated	^[22]
		<u>Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Comedy or Musical</u>	Nicolas Cage	Nominated	

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External links

- [Official website \(https://a24films.com/films/dream-scenario\)](https://a24films.com/films/dream-scenario)
 - *Dream Scenario* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt21942866/>) at [IMDb](#)
 - *Dream Scenario* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/dream_scenario) at [Rotten Tomatoes](#)
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