

# American Dreamer (2022 film)

***American Dreamer*** is a 2022 American black comedy film directed by Paul Dektor (in his feature debut) and written by Theodore Melfi. Based on a segment from the radio show **This American Life**, it stars Peter Dinklage as a professor who tries to buy the estate of a lonely widow played by Shirley MacLaine. Kim Quinn, Danny Pudi, Danny Glover, and Matt Dillon also star.

The film premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival on June 11, 2022. It was released in the United States on March 8, 2024.

## Premise

Dr. Phil Loder, a low-level, adjunct professor of economics, has always dreamed of owning a home. His wish becomes a possibility when a lonely widow offers Phil her sprawling estate for pennies. The deal, however, is too good to be true.

## Cast

- Peter Dinklage as Dr. Phil Loder
- Shirley MacLaine as Astrid, the widow
- Kim Quinn as Maggie
- Danny Pudi as Craig, the Dean of Economics at Brockton University
- Matt Dillon as Dell, a real estate agent
- Danny Glover as Jerry, a private investigator
- Michelle Mylett as Clare, a graduate student
- Peter Kelamis as Burt, an officer
- Rebecca Olson as Beatrice / Babette
- Garry Chalk as Nicolai
- Peter New as Dr. Turpin

## Production

The independent film *American Dreamer* was first announced on February 2, 2021, with Peter Dinklage, Shirley MacLaine, and Kimberly Quinn attached to star.<sup>[3]</sup> In March, Danny Glover, Matt Dillon, Danny Pudi, and Michelle Mylett joined the cast;<sup>[4]</sup> production began on March 15 in Vancouver, and was set to conclude on April 16, 2021.<sup>[5]</sup> Filming also took place in Victoria,

### *American Dreamer*



Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	Paul Dektor
<b>Screenplay by</b>	<span><span>Theodore Melfi</span></span>
<b>Story by</b>	<span><span>Theodore Melfi</span></span> <div><span><span>Chris Wehner</span></span><sup>[1]</sup></div>
<b>Based on</b>	A segment from <i><span><i>This American Life</i></span></i>
<b>Produced by</b>	<span><span>Theodore Melfi</span></span> <div><span><span>Kim Quinn</span></span><div><span><span>Peter Dinklage</span></span><div><span><span>David Ginsberg</span></span><div><span><span>Toyo Shimano</span></span><div><span><span>Paul Dektor</span></span></div></div></div></div></div>
<b>Starring</b>	<span><span>Peter Dinklage</span></span> <div><span><span>Shirley MacLaine</span></span><div><span><span>Kim Quinn</span></span><div><span><span>Danny Pudi</span></span><div><span><span>Danny Glover</span></span><div><span><span>Matt Dillon</span></span></div></div></div></div></div>

British Columbia, where partial parts of the British Columbia Parliament Buildings were converted into "Brockton University" as the film is set in Massachusetts.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Release

*American Dreamer* had a world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival on June 11, 2022.<sup>[2][7]</sup> It was released in the United States by Vertical Entertainment on March 8, 2024.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Reception

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 52% of 31 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.5/10.<sup>[9]</sup> Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 60 out of 100, based on 5 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.<sup>[10]</sup>

Carla Renata of RogerEbert.com gave the film three out of four stars and wrote, "Emmy winner Peter Dinklage is a perfect thespian match for the legendary Shirley MacLaine when it comes to curmudgeon-laced dialogue, while simultaneously giving these characters so much heart and grit that audiences will be inspired to reach into the screen to give them a hug. They're a wonderful duo, and it's their contributions and chemistry that anchor the film."<sup>[11]</sup>

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<b>Cinematography</b>	<u>Nicolas Bolduc</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Lisa Jane Robison</u>
<b>Music by</b>	<u>Jeff Russo</u>
<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Flying Firebird</u> <u>Goldenlight Films</u> <u>Estuary Films</u> <u>Noble600</u>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Vertical</u>
<b>Release dates</b>	June 11, 2022 (Tribeca) March 8, 2024 (United States)
<b>Running time</b>	106 minutes <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English

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## External links

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- *American Dreamer* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13884444/>) at IMDb
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