

## Matt Damon in 'Downsizing' Offers Few Small Pleasures

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 22, 2017 - 10:51am

- [Amazon Studios](#) [2]
- [Christoph Waltz](#) [3]
- [Downsizing](#) [4]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [5]
- [Hong Chau](#) [6]
- [Jason Sudeikis](#) [7]
- [Kristen Wiig](#) [8]
- [Matt Damon](#) [9]
- [Movie Review](#) [10]
- [Overpopulation](#) [11]
- [Paramount Pictures](#) [12]
- [Science Fiction](#) [13]
- [Spike Walters](#) [14]



Rating: **2.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – “Downsizing” is an interesting premise that doesn’t ultimately go anywhere interesting. Part of the problem is that writer/director Alexander Payne doesn’t seem to know what kind of a movie he wants it to be... it’s part cerebral Woody Allen futuristic comedy, part sci-fi social satire about Midwestern malaise, and winds up failing at both.

The time is the not so distant future where science has developed an innovative way to solve overpopulation – scientists have found a way to shrink people to just 5 inches tall. They remain proportional, but occupy a much smaller footprint on the planet. While small people use a whole lot less resources and help the planet, going small also allows average people to live the good life since their dollars stretch a whole lot farther. They live in planned communities full of golf courses and McMansions, under domes which protect little people from the sun’s rays.



Kristen Wiig and Matt Damon as Audrey and Paul in 'Downsizing'

*Photo credit: Paramount Pictures*

Matt Damon is yet another in Payne’s collection of Midwestern mopes. He’s a cash-strapped husband named Paul working as an occupational therapist at Omaha Steaks, after his medical school dreams got dashed when he had to drop out to help his sick mother. When an old high school classmate (Jason Sudeikis) and his wife “get small,” it inspires Paul and his wife Audrey (Kristin Wiig) to leave their old life behind and take the plunge.

The problem is, Paul goes through with it, but Audrey backs out – he's stuck 5 inches tall while she goes on with her normal sized life. There are some funny jokes here in the vein of Woody Allen's "Sleeper," such as a small Paul trying to sign his normal sized divorce papers, but they're mere blips on the radar. Instead, we get lots of scenes of Damon as Paul now living in a tiny apartment building trying to date and find his place in the new small world. Subplots are introduced, and then dropped, as Paul muddles his way through a fog of dissatisfaction... his new life offers few small pleasures, but none of the riches and enjoyment he was promised. Christoph Waltz shows up as a Serbian businessman making a killing with questionable business practices.

Paul's world gets a little bit bigger when he comes into contact with a cleaning lady (Hong Chau) with a prosthetic leg, who lives on the outskirts of the planned community. She's a refugee and dissident from Vietnam who puts Damon's own sad sack attitude about his own struggles in perspective. While Chau has earned a Golden Globe nomination for her performance here, I don't know why she was directed to squawk every line like she's in the Russian Roulette scene in "The Deer Hunter."



Christoph Waltz and Hong Chau in 'Downsizing'

Photo credit: Paramount Pictures

Alexander Payne's best films ("Sideways," "The Descendants") uncover real insights about the human condition. But his worst ones are forced exercises in trying to make a point. "Downsizing" isn't quite as blunt – and less headache inducing – than "Nebraska" was (his previous film), but its execution is too muddled to say much of anything. It's a small world after all, and Damon as Paul ultimately decides to make his just a little bit bigger. That's about it. Payne is interesting enough to warrant some attention for whatever project he takes on, but hopefully he has bigger dreams ahead than this small wonder of a failure.

*"Downsizing" opens everywhere on December 22nd.. Featuring Matt Damon, Kristen Wiig, Jason Sudeikis, Christoph Waltz and Hong Chau. Written and directed by Alexander Payne. Rated "R"*



[15]

By [SPIKE WALTERS](#) [16]

Contributor

HollywoodChicago.com

[spike@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:spike@hollywoodchicago.com) [15]

© 2017 Spike Walters, HollywoodChicago.com

**Source URL (retrieved on Mar 29 2024 - 5:02am):**

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/28177/matt-damon-in-downsizing-offers-few-small-pleasures>

#### Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>

[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/amazon-studios>

[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/christoph-waltz>

[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/downsizing>

[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>

[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/hong-chau>

- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/jason-sudeikis>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/kristen-wiig>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/matt-damon>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/overpopulation>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/paramount-pictures>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/science-fiction>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/spike-walters>
- [15] <mailto:spike@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#SPIKE>