

Blu-Ray Review: Steven Soderbergh's Excellent 'The Informant!' With Matt Damon

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 23, 2010 - 12:07pm

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CHICAGO – Steven Soderbergh is arguably the most important American filmmaker working today and his “The Informant!” with Matt Damon, just released on Blu-ray and DVD, is a great piece of evidence to support that argument. He continues to bring traditional stories to life in continuously unique, interesting ways.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.5/5.0**

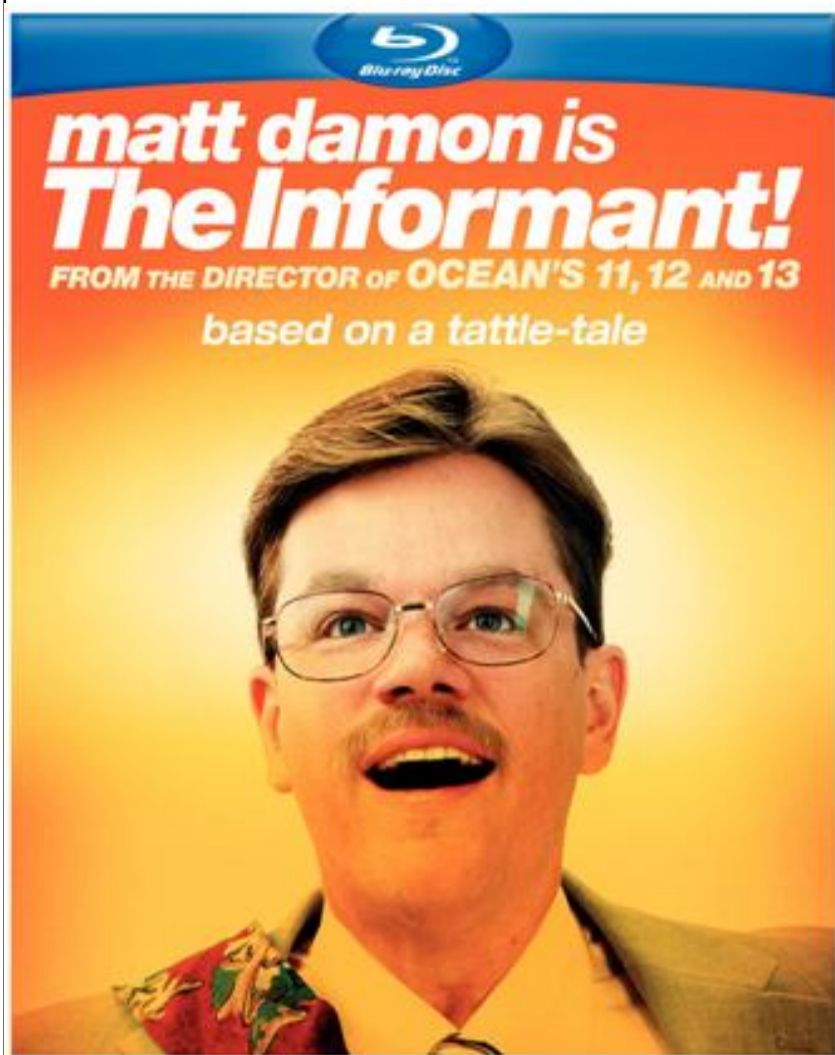
The story of “The Informant!” is one familiar to audiences, especially from a director who tackled the toppling of a corrupt Midwestern company by a little person before in “Erin Brockovich”. Erin and Mark Whitacre (Damon) couldn't have less in common. One was a heroine. The other was a moron.



The Informant! was released on Blu-ray and DVD on February 23rd, 2010.

Photo credit: Warner Brothers Home Video

Mark is a typical Midwestern schlub with a loving wife (Melanie Lynskey), two kids, a nice home, and a very good job at Archer Daniels Midland monitoring Lysine pricing and its possible damage on the environment. Things snowball for the easily distracted doofus when he calls in the FBI after a possible extortion plot. From there, things go very haywire.



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Photo credit: Warner Brothers Home Video

FBI agents Brian (Scott Bakula) and Bob (Joel McHale) tell Mark that they're going to place a bug on his home phone, at which point he realizes that the massive, international, price-fixing scheme of which he's been a part could easily unravel. Like so many good Americans, Mark covers his own ass first and turns informant, wearing a wire to provide the evidence to bring down a scheme costing the consumer on a daily basis.

Mark has read a lot of Grisham and Crichton novels but he's missed a few essential details, like how you can't commit crimes just because you're helping the FBI and he has some weird ideas about how whistle blowers and the companies they destroy are treated after the sirens spin and the cuffs are clinked.

The details of "The Informant!" are of very little interest to Mark and so writer Scott Z. Burns and Soderbergh brilliantly don't even allow the audience to hear most of the detailed FBI conversations or meetings that are being wiretapped. Instead, we're allowed into Mark's moronic, perpetually-distracted brain in which he ponders about buying ties overseas to save money and how polar bears know their noses are black. Mark is a narcissistic oddball, a man who lives in his own brain and not only doesn't share pertinent information that Bob and Brian desperately need to know, it never makes it through the flurry of useless information dominating his stream-of-consciousness.

Damon may have been Oscar-nominated for "Invictus" but this is SUCH a better performance that it's remarkable. It's arguably the most fascinating and fearless work of his career. Soderbergh and Damon wisely refuse to play Mark as an everyman with a heart of gold. He's a moron with a heart of greed. Damon's comic timing is perfect and he's far from along in a great, unusual cast that includes deadpan turns by comic character actors like Tony Hale, Patton Oswalt, and even The Smothers Brothers.

There's no emotional through line and the ironic, cold nature of the film could turn people off but once you adjust to the unusual style of "The Informant!," it's hard not to get drawn into this bizarre world, one that only could have been brought to you by Steven Soderbergh.

Warner Brothers is wisely releasing "The Informant!" in one of their Blu-ray/DVD packs that includes the film in both formats in one case (along with a digital copy as well). Special features include additional scenes and a commentary by Steven Soderbergh and writer Scott Z. Burns.

'The Informant!' is released by Warner Brothers Home Video and stars Matt Damon, Scott Bakula, Joel McHale, Melanie Lynskey, Rick Overton, Tom Papa, Tom Wilson, Clancy Brown, Tony Hale, Ann Cusack, Allan Havey, Paul F. Tompkins, Patton Oswalt, and Rusty Schwimmer. It was written by Scott Z. Burns and directed by Steven Soderbergh. The Informant is available on Blu-ray Combo Pack, DVD and for Download 2/23! <http://bit.ly/dAGYZn> [19]. It is rated R.



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