

## Blu-Ray Review: 'Insomnia' From 'Inception' Director Christopher Nolan

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 19, 2010 - 2:33pm

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CHICAGO – In many ways, Christopher Nolan's "Insomnia," recently released on beautiful Blu-ray, is the perfect companion piece to his new masterpiece, "Inception," now playing in theaters. The film may not get the international attention of "The Dark Knight" but it stands as further proof that this man is one of our best living directors.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

A follow-up to the highly-buzzed "Memento" was bound to be difficult for any director and so Chris Nolan turned to a remake of an excellent foreign film and made it distinctly its own. Al Pacino, in one of his most underrated performances, plays a police officer sent to Alaska to find a killer. He's already weary from a world that keeps bringing him down and his problem worsens in the land of the midnight sun.



Insomnia was released on Blu-ray on July 13th, 2010

Photo credit: Warner Bros.

While totally thrown off his game mentally and physically, our traveler makes a crucial mistake and gives his target (Robin Williams in one of his last great performances back when he took his career seriously) leverage over his fate. The cat-and-mouse game features a number of themes that Nolan would continue to explore in his more high-profile recent films including the gray area between good and evil.



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Photo credit: Warner Bros.

I believe that if you showed most people “The Dark Knight,” “Inception,” and “Insomnia,” they would know that they were directed by the same person. And the fact is there are very few filmmakers out there who so support the auteur theory that the director puts his own stamp on whatever he does. There may be no caped crusaders in “Insomnia” but the look of the film (in no small part because it was also shot by “TDK” and “Inception” master cinematographer Wally Pfister) has so much in common with the blockbusters that have made Nolan arguably the Steven Spielberg of the new millennium.

Of course, “Insomnia” hits Blu-ray in time to piggy-back on the massive success of “Inception” (which is even noted on the front of the case) but this is also an excellent release on its own terms. I wish there were some new special features, but the HD transfer is much more notable than average with a stellar 1080p picture. I forgot how visually strong “Insomnia” was, remembering the film more as a performance piece. The cast is uniformly strong, but it’s interesting to watch the movie now with hindsight and realize how much of a force Chris Nolan was even on only his second film.

As for special features, most are presented in SD but there are a series of great commentaries, including a feature-length one with Nolan and scene-specific ones with some of the notable other players including Hilary Swank, Pfister, the great editor Dody Dorn, and more.

#### Special Features:

- o Additional Scenes
- o Director Christopher Nolan Commentary
- o Hilary Swank, Production Designer Nathan Crowley, Editor Dody Dorn, Cinematographer Wally Pfister, and Screenwriter Hilary Seitz
- o “Day For Night” — Making the Movie
- o “180 Degrees” — A Conversation with Christopher Nolan and Al Pacino
- o “In the Fog” — Cinematography and Production Design
- o “Eyes Wide Open” — The Insomniac’s World
- o Stills Gallery
- o Theatrical Trailer

*‘Insomnia’ stars Al Pacino, Robin Williams, Hilary Swank, Maura Tierney, Martin Donovan, Nicky Katt, and Paul Dooley. It was written by Hilary Seitz and directed by Christopher Nolan. It was released on Blu-ray on July 13th, 2010.*



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